



FRANCE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

WORK PACKAGE 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLITICAL CONTEXT

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1. ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the French situation concerning youth vulnerability and the related public policies at the national level.

The starting point is a historical presentation of the progressive emergence of youth in French public policies until the ongoing reform initiated by the actual government in 2013.

The next section aims at discussing the notion of vulnerability and the factors of inequality in the French context. The role played by school and access to diploma appears central in the French system. This explains why vulnerable youth are usually referred to early school leavers in France.

Youth policy in France is a specific national policy based on transversality between public action sectors. It aims at bringing together various stakeholders national ministries (especially youth, education, employment, justice), regional and local authorities, NGOs, etc. The relation to firms remains relatively weak. The transversality principle based on the idea of a global social intervention towards individuals is developed since the beginning of the 80's. This global approach to youth problems supposes an intense coordination activity in a segmented and sectorialized public action ruled a very centralized State. This coordination has been ever since very difficult to achieve.

A precise description of programs, measures and organizations is hence quite difficult to conduct. This is reinforced by the on-going large set of reforms engaged since the last 2 years.

2. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a broad description of national youth policies in France. French Youth policies constitute a complex and large set of public policies. It brings together different public action domain such as education, employment, health, housing, transportation or training. It relies on a complex arena of policy makers and implementers acting at the national, regional and local level in public and private organizations. Since the mid 70s when the issue of youth unemployment and poverty appeared on the French political agenda, many ways to convert this sociological problem in terms of political solution have been experienced and a lot of policy tools have been forged. To put it a nutshell, vulnerable youth policy is a complex matter in terms of normative perceptions (IBJJ), system of actors and policy instruments.

This report aims at giving an overview of these policies, the way they evolved overtime and who are the actors in charge of designing and implementing them, at what level and according to what conception of the public interest.

Even if the regions have been given more competencies over youth training, guidance and employment during the last two decades, the core of youth policies remains in the hand of the national government. This explains why this report is focused on the national policymaking process and context. Some insights on region's competencies are given and will be further developed in WP4.

The French youth policy has been redefined after the 2013 presidential elections and has been presented by the new government as a front row priority. At the same time, and with strong interconnexions, the educational policy has also been “re-founded” (to use the terms of the French minister of education). The new Youth policy called “Priorité Jeunesse” (Priority to youth) has an important educational dimension and brings to the forefront the issue of early school leaving as a factor of vulnerability. This explains why a great part of this report is focused on the education policy area and the issue of qualification of youngsters between 16 and 25 years. 16 years marks the end of compulsory school while 25 years is the institutionalized age of adulthood in the employment policy.

3. METHODS

The methods used to gather the empirical material of this report is of two kinds: On the one hand a documentary analysis and the other one a series of semi-structured interviews.

Concerning the documentary analysis, two types of documents have been collected and analysed here.

1. An extensive review of the existing legal documents, national budgets and grey literature (evaluation studies, data collections, parliamentary reports) have been conducted on the broad topic of youth policies focusing on youth employment and educational matters. We have focused on the more recent legal provision concerning youth policies especially the actual youth strategy “Priorité Jeunesse” and the innovative policies related to it.
2. A state of the art reviewing the French academic literature on youth sociology, youth policies, youth employment and educational failure. More specifically, we have reviewed the academic works in sociology and political science dealing with the following fields: youth access to labour market, school dropout, urban policies and youth policies.

This documentary analysis has been completed by a series of semi-structured interviews. These interviews have been conducted using the interview guide provided by WP3 leaders. The choice of the interviewees has been made following a “snowball” logic. We have concentrated our interviews on policy makers, governmental expertise producers and academic experts.

All interviews have been transcribed and treated on a transversal/thematic driven process of material analysis. Participants and organization’s names are given under the permission of the interviewees.

National government policy makers	2
Youth policy experts	3
National observatory on poverty (ONPES)	1
National observatory on youth (INJEP)	1
National observatory on deprived urban areas (ONZUS)	1
Networks and NGOs (AFEV – FV)	2
Total	10

4. NATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Foreword: the progressive emergence of a Youth Policy in France

In France, youth is a recent policy concern. Indeed, during the nineteenth century, the only “program” that was strictly designed for the young boys was their conscription in the French army. Established in 1798 by the Jourdan law, it became compulsory for all boys after 1905.

During WW2, the Vichy regime established three measures under the responsibility of a General Secretariat for Youth. The youth camps, the “boss schools” or schools for executive leaders, and a network of Youth Houses (Maisons de la jeunesse) are created to control the youth. After the end of the war, the French State transferred the responsibility for public action towards youth to Community or Popular education (“éducation populaire”) organizations and youth NGOs.

With the “movement of may 1968” the willingness of young people to gather a place in society bursts. The issue becomes increasingly politicized. Governments are making substantial investments, particularly in education. During the end of the 70’s the issue of youth unemployment appears on the political agenda and the first action plan was raised in 1977 with the so-called “Plan Barre” (named after the Prime minister Raymond Barre) or Pact for youth employment (Pacte pour l’emploi des jeunes).

In the early 80s the worrying situation of young people was raised in the public debate. They appeared particularly impacted by the phenomena of social insecurity, impoverishment and unemployment. Pierre Mauroy (French PM) asked a French social work stakeholder, Bertrand Schwartz, for a report on the occupational and social integration of youth. This report published in 1982 proposed the creation of Local missions for youth employment and professional integration (Missions locales pour l’insertion professionnelle des jeunes). This territorialized one stop shop program was designed to promote integrated services (employment, health, housing, etc.) for young people aged 16 to 25 who left school without any qualifications or job. The following year saw the creation of the Delegation for the social and professional integration of young people in difficulty (DIJ) at the national level and an interdepartmental committee (CIJ) at the local level. Hence, the efforts of the State focused on the professional integration of young people rather than on a comprehensive global youth policy.

In 2000, the work of the General Planning Commission (Commissariat Général du Plan) put forward the issue of youth autonomy and empowerment. According to this diagnosis, the French Youth is plagued by:

- Lengthening of the schooling’s duration (about 40% of an age group pursuing graduate studies);
- Difficult access to the labour market (between the end of studies and access to stable job, about one in two young encounters a transition made of successive precarious jobs);
- Earlier emotional maturity (forming couples without the conditions of residential and professional autonomy being met);

- Significant increase of the dependency of young adults vis-à-vis their families while their aspirations for autonomy are highly developed.

The November 2005 urban riots propelled the problems of youth's unemployment; early school leaving, urban violence, ethnical and housing problems on top of the national political agenda.

In 2008, the public policy towards poverty reduction showed that young people are particularly vulnerable, with a rate of 20% showing income below the poverty line (against 13 % in the general population).

In 2009, the government policy for young adults and adolescents changed. The Interdepartmental Committee on Youth initiated:

- A government's action plan for information, apprenticeship and professionalization of youth under 26 years
- A government's action plan for youth " Action for Youth "
- A law " Orientation - Training", dated 24 November 2009, on training throughout life.

In the context of a National Commission on Youth Policy, chaired by Martin Hirsch, High Commissioner for active solidarities against poverty and for youth (Haut commissaire aux solidarities actives et à la jeunesse), a Green Paper was released. The 57 recommendations proposed were aiming at reframing the 16-25 years' policy. One of the main drivers was the creation of a Fund for Youth Experimentation (Fonds d'expérimentation Jeunesse – FEJ). A budget of 200 million€ was to be spent to stimulate and support innovative territorial initiatives. These initiatives were to be precisely evaluated in order to call for further generalization.

In 2010, two additional levers are implemented for a new youth policy:

- The March 10th 2010 Act creating the Civic Service which aims at meeting the need of youth engagement while giving them an income that varies from 540 to 600 €;
- The implementation of the active solidarity income (Revenu de Solidarité Active – RSA, a French activation driven minimum income scheme for adults) extended to youngsters by September 1st, 2010.

In 2013, the Intersectoral Committee on Youth (Comité interministériel de la Jeunesse - CIJ) introduced a new policy entitled "*Priority to Youth*". This policy is based on 13 priority projects broken down into 47 measures. It aims at reforming public policy for young people and is based on four pillars:

1. Give priority to common law (i.e. universalistic & non-differential) for all that concerns young people's access to social rights
2. Reinforce young people's autonomy and secure their life path as a whole (training, housing, health, etc.).
3. Fight against inequality and discrimination
4. Encourage youth participation in public debate

The proposed measures include experimentations such as testing the guidance of children in 3rd grade according to their sole wishes (with their parents), and testing of a new

decentralized guidance public service (Service Public Régional d'Orientation - SPRO) under the responsibility of the French regions.

Finally, regarding the development and implementation of public policy for youth, a national youth conference will be created from the merger of the National Council of Popular Education and Youth (Conseil National de l'Éducation Populaire et de la Jeunesse - CNEPJ) and the Youth National Council (Conseil National de la Jeunesse - CNJ), and an interministerial delegate in charge of intersectoral coordination will be appointed.

4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth

Who are the disadvantaged youth – what makes them disadvantaged? What informs this definition? Do the definitions used by different stakeholder vary e.g. state vs. third sector definitions? What is the predominant definition? What indicators and statistics are used to measure youth disadvantage.

In terms of IBJJ, the French term "défavorisé" (disadvantaged) by its French etymology refers to the absence of belonging and recognition¹: A person is disadvantaged compared to what benefits to the group to which he/she would be legitimate to belong. One is not "disadvantaged in itself" but "in relation with". Thus it is reflected in our material definitions referred to a public policy field (e.g. Education) or a membership group (the students). The term questions in the same way the idea of inequality: A person is disadvantaged because it does not benefit from what benefits to this group (e.g. absence of diploma).

Thus, inequality may be *"due to social origin, family breakdown, inequality among territories, whether urban or rural areas, which has often been underestimated in the Youth Policy. [...] There are also difficulties related to health, health becomes more a factor of inequality. Access to housing also for young people in search of autonomy is very complicated. So, here are some inequality factors that I can highlight: school, family, access to institutionalized programs"* (interview with France Volontaire (NGO), Manager in charge of the implementation of civil service). One of our interviewees, Chairing Youth Research Program at the School of Advanced Studies in Public Health (EHESP) stated the same. Defining factors of inequality and disadvantage youth in France *"depends on public policy. I do not think there is a general approach to youth. In education: we have a definition of the disadvantages deriving from the family of the student. We say well that disadvantaged children are from disadvantaged backgrounds and often behind it, the children of immigrant origin and then children living in single-parent families. And then there is the issue of educational inequality, where there will be disadvantage for those who fail to conform to the expectations of the system. And then we have other effects, if one is in the field of urban policies such as people beneficiaries of urban policies. Here, depending on the sector, definitions of disadvantage will vary"*.

Taking as a reference unit the highest membership, i.e. the entire population, we can say that in France, the deprived youngsters are doubly excluded: excluded from the wider

¹ From the Latin *De* taken off from a whole and *Faveo*: from the Greek "community feeling." A mark of favor is an applause.

community enjoying a "normal"² standard of living and excluded also from the smaller community supported by anti-poverty measures. Thus in 2007, a conference on the homeless presented: *"Young people aged 18 to 24 are the forgotten from the 'net solidarity' that the society has implemented for the most vulnerable individuals. Under the age of 18, minors in large family or with social difficulties fall under the Welfare of Children (Aide Sociale à l'Enfance – ASE), which, together with its limitations, provides them an obligation to take care. At the age of 25, the poorest are entitled to a minimum income (RMI), which provides the resources for survival. But between these two ages, the society does not recognize any obligation and we find among people homeless youth wandering entering adulthood delivered to themselves"* (Consensus " out of street ", 29-30 November 2007). In this quotation the recognition of the "youth" category takes place through the nature of the social care: before the age of 18, the social rights are attached to the family, after 24 years of age to the individual. Between these two limits we find an age class " left behind". Who are they?

Juveniles deprived of a fundamental right

The most vulnerable are young people leaving early and without qualifications the school system³, impeding their personal freedom and their autonomy and undermining the exercise of other rights. Thus, "does not possess a diploma" is the first criterion of definition. In our empirical material, the educational institution is in fact heavily questioned. French disadvantaged youth are *"coming out of school without any qualifications"* (France Volontaire); *"poorly qualified"* (National Observatory of Deprived Urban Areas - ONZUS), etc. The rate of early school leaving is a key indicator of persistent inequality factors selected by the National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion: *"13 % of young people [leaving school] without training, without qualification every year and this figure does not move now since last 10-15 years. This is a persistent inequality in the sense that we can not reduce this indicator. It is still pretty basic"* (National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion - ONPES). Thus, *"the first factor of inequality is school"*, the leading cause of disadvantage *"it will be the pupil who fails to comply with the expectations of our system"* (Interview with P. Loncle).

Which disadvantages among young people are defined as legitimate/standard outcomes of educational processes and labour market position? Are they static/immutable over the life course or are they reversible/changeable through social support etc.? Are they formally regulated or informally (social norms, gender roles, forms of discrimination etc.) regulated?

The meritocratic illusion

In France, the sociology of education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964) have largely shown that educational inequalities are a mirror of social inequalities. However, our interlocutors recall *"The young people from poorer families have the lowest degree"* (Interview with a former DIJ); *"In France, as known for some time now: the educational system does not correct social inequalities, on the contrary it strengthens them!"* (Interview with an expert of youth

² Conform to the norm i.e. below the poverty line

³ *"Probability of unemployment tripled compared to a professional bachelor"* (Labadie, 2012).

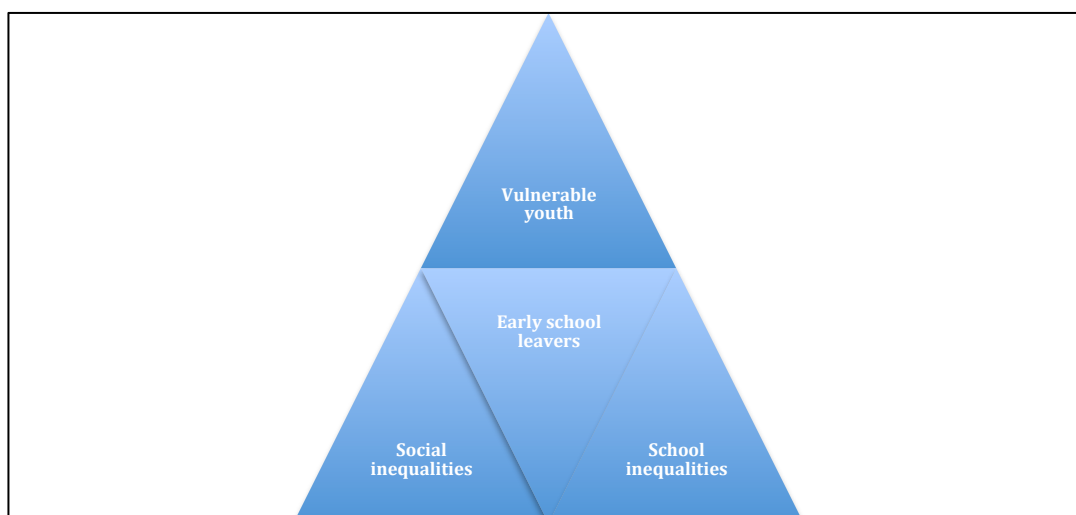
policies). The meritocratic system legitimates the inequalities. *"I think what we do not discuss are the inequalities that come from social classes actually. As we live in a meritocratic educational system's full illusion, it is as if there was no inequality at the outset. So yes I think the problem, it is a little bit there, is that we are in an illusion of equality of opportunity for all with respect to the system while this is so precisely a big, big, illusion and that behind the façade people become more aware that this is a bit of a fool's game and suddenly it's become unbearable inequalities for those who are the victims"* (Interview with an expert of youth policies).

Another interviewee states that: *"The idea that school strictly reproduces the social structure is quite divided in France. All observers share it. Now the ideal school is in principle contrary to the ideal of equality of opportunity between all those who enrol in the school. It is possible that this ideal is shared and defended by those who are responsible to implement, especially teachers, but it is still unlikely. The data is so permanent that even those who are not informed observers must still convince themselves that the school is a device to reproduce social inequalities"* (Interview a former DIJ).

Undoubtedly, social and professional inequalities are bound together with a starting point at school: *"About initial training, I think it's pretty clear in terms of socio-professional categories, we see that young people do not have access equally to training"* (interview with ONPES).

Thus, school and social inequalities are reflecting and generating each other. If some dropouts are able to "bounce", the most troubled by social and professional integration suffer from the lack of degree. Borrowed from Latin "can be injured", the term vulnerable starts with the lack of diploma as a grounding vulnerability factor.

Figure 1: The lack of a diploma, the first factor of vulnerability



However, through the prism of meritocratic illusion, the vulnerability factor revolt little the victims *"we worked a lot with students from 3rd asking them what they tend to, they expect the school system and they have a lot of speech of this kind: 'when you want you can' even when they are very, very poor"*(Interview with an expert of youth policies) as well as the entire community. If there are movements against poverty (e.g. Don Quixote, housing

protest movement which motto is a home for all) we do not know of similar movements for "diploma for all".

As expressed by several interviewees, this discriminating factor arises from the education system and it is commonly known if not accepted: *"troubled youth are defined as traditionally in France through the non- possession of diploma"*(interview with INJEP). *"The idea that school strictly reproduces the social structure is quite divided about France. [...] The data is so permanent that even those who are not informed observers must still convince the school is a device to reproduce social inequalities* (Interview with a former DIJ).

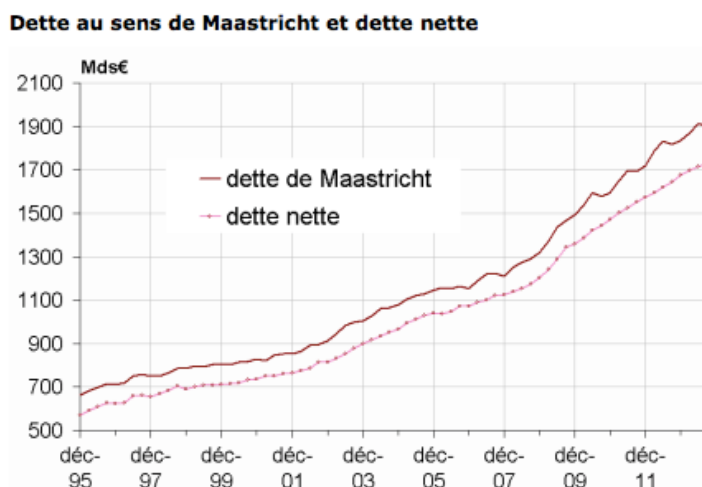
As a proof, the French results of the OECD PISA survey are clearly pointing the accountability of the educational system in the reinforcement of inequalities. Consequently, the reform of this institutional pillar is on top of the political agenda.

Another index is the "discovery" of the NEETs (Not in Employment, Education and Training) by French academics and politicians. According to a recent survey conducted by the Ministry of youth, in 2011, nearly 15% of youth aged 15 to 29 years are not in employment or training. The share of NEET has increased between 2007 and 2010 (an increase of 2.8 points for 20-24 years and 3.9 percentage points for those aged 15-29)⁴.

Did the crisis change the national understanding of disadvantage? Did it lead to a shift in the national IJJ or are changes a continuation of longer term trends? Has the crisis increased the number of disadvantaged youth, has it shifted the composition of disadvantaged youth etc.?

Budget documents announce equivalent public debt to 93.4 % of GDP. From an economic point of view, France is in " a dangerous area " (Public accounting court – Cour des comptes, 2013)

Figure 2: France's public debt



⁴ Comité interministériel de la Jeunesse, *Priorité Jeunesse*, 21 février 2013, p. 7.

For the actors interviewed the crisis phenomenon would have increased vulnerability as well as its position on the agenda: *"The crisis has led to the conference on the issue of poverty and how to solve it but I do not have the impression that there is a great novelty in this. It is recurrent, it is always the same subjects returning to the front of the stage: the search for employment, debt, housing of the poor, etc. what has changed? Yet nothing (Interview with a former DIJ),"* it [the crisis] revealed an increase in the phenomena of youth's precariousness. This is very clear. It really emphasized it. If there is a change that has made the crisis, it is this one: it really has put forward in the public arena the question of insecurity and poverty among young people, who were already well advanced, well documented, but there really, today, it really becomes a matter of public policy, inevitably. There is something, the numbers are too strong for that we can ignore the case" (interview with ONPES).

The crisis accentuated the cleavage and the duration of the youth. As noted above, the French youth is fragmented by social origin. Popular categories have less access to qualifications than most favoured categories. Diploma constituting a strong signal on the labour market, the most popular youth is at risk of employability problems. This has slowed down the access to financial independence and created difficulties delaying the creation of an autonomous family unit. If we consider that youth is a time of transition between school and working life and between the original family and the procreation family, then we can say that the popular classes suffer a prolonged youth, especially in times of a durable crisis when the labour market is highly selective.

The crisis *" has exacerbated inequality factors and perhaps in terms of performances. That is to say that again in a city where you could always find a few individuals among ones comrades who remained, who had found a job, started a family or otherwise, even today those who have passed through excellence finally found it difficult to integrate. So these models that may be in membership groups have been weakened. It's the same thing at the family level: if you have a big brother or big sister who yesterday had managed to get his talents a diploma and a job, today many graduates are struggling. So these efforts we asked each other, it is not obvious that the way that you suggested leads to a job, a situation "* (interview with France Volontaire).

Vulnerability factors have developed facing the crisis. So that the unemployment rate for young boys became higher than girls, while it has never been the case! The unemployment rate curve of boys crossed the curve of the unemployment rate for girls. Because they are more often industrial jobs, therefore there since 2010, the unemployment rate for males under 30 years rose above the rate of unemployment girls! While remaining high for the one as for the other, one have grown higher than the other one but it was one of the effects of the crisis. And then the downgrading process in hiring and competition between positions rose. The competition for positions making graduate youngsters taking unskilled jobs has worsened. As mentioned by an interviewee *"competition for available places is at the expense of the less skilled even for unskilled jobs"*.

French youth is also fragmented by geographical origin at different scales. The economic context creates or reinforces territorial disparities. At the regional level as well as at the finer scale of neighbourhoods, *"this issues of low skilled youth takes a particular echo"* (interview with ONZUS). The territory can be a source of inequality due to urban segregation or residential stigma.

"[The crisis] has affected everyone, qualified or not, but rather those who were under-equipped to tackle the labour market and those who were in deprived areas. All young people who now belong to the territories where social plans have multiplied, the industrial territories, with an industrial history, these young longer show a ladle over the head"(interview with INJEP).

These targeted public policy areas are places where social difficulties are cumulating: lack of education, ethnic relations, high unemployment, downgraded housing, etc. *"In these areas, the concentration of population of immigrants or descendants of immigrants is important because more than half of the urban policy population was either an immigrant herself to 25% or even 25% descendant of immigrants. We do not count the descendants of 2nd and 3rd generation. (...) It has been shown also that there was access to the most difficult job related to these migratory origins"* (interview with ONZUS)

Another remarkable phenomenon is the spatial mismatch between living and working places: *"Which is explained by both the location of these areas and their limited integration into urban units, there is a phenomenon of isolation in these neighbourhoods. So you have to look under the microscope, every neighbourhoods are not locked but there are a number that are"*(interview with ONZUS).

This mismatch is reinforced by the role played by low social capital *"beyond this physical isolation that can exist is another kind of isolation by the networks. That is to say that when asked today – because we have surveys that do – young encountering the biggest difficulties to integrate the labour market, evoke as a primary reason the lack of social networks, people who put their foot in the stirrup"*(interview with ONZUS).

The extreme poverty rate increased in France between 2007 and 2009 by 38% (EU- SILC Eurostat). In 2010, ONPES pointing the appearance of a “new” younger audience: youth out of their family environment: young unrelated to their parents, without financial resources, rather unskilled, sometimes experiencing significant psychological difficulties, frequently homeless, and therefore in a situation of great vulnerability. The survey conducted by the FNARS (a network of urgent housing NGOs) confirms these characteristics of vulnerable youngsters: family breakdown, lack of roof and lack of resources. If some have held precarious or temporary employment, they are anymore able to access it because of the worsening economic climate.

Troubled youth may have different profiles:

- Young French in precarious employment or seeking employment, they combine the difficulties of access to housing and employment
- Students with limited financial resources
- Young foreigners in an irregular situation in particular, often in situations of extreme hardship

Strongly overrepresented among job applicants, young people have been severely affected by the crisis since 2008. The employment rate of recent assets deteriorated.

4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry

In France, being young is a disadvantage when it comes to entering onto the labour market. By the end of 2012, the unemployment rate of young workers (under 25 years) amounted to 24.2% in France.

What opportunities are available to young people in the labour market and of what quality? What has been the impact of the economic downturn on young people and the wider labour market?

Youth unemployment constitutes a major burden for all French governments since the end of the 70's. As reminded by ILO, youth unemployment and poverty is a structural, global challenge for human societies: *"The current global youth employment crisis is unprecedented, as globally young people are on average three times more likely than adults to be out of a job, and four out of every ten people unemployed worldwide are young people. (...) More youth are poor or underemployed than ever before: some 309 million young people work but live in households that earn less than the equivalent of US\$2 per day"* (ILO, 2012). For most of the European countries (especially southern Europe), the youth unemployment rate remains heavily high, higher than the average unemployment rate: *"Until the end of 2008, the youth unemployment rate in the EU-27 has been around twice as high as the rate for the total population, reaching its minimum value (18.1 %) in the first quarter 2008. The economic crisis, however, seems to have hit the young more than other age groups. From the beginning of 2009, the gap between the youth and the total unemployment rates has increased, so that at the end of 2012 the youth unemployment rate was 2.6 times the total rate"*⁵. The situation in France makes no difference. In December 2011, the youth unemployment rate reached 23.8% while the average rate was below 10%. As reminded by F. Lefresne, *"in the past 30 years, the youth unemployment rate has never fallen below 15 percent and has regularly exceeded 20 per cent"* (Lefresne, 2012). During the same period, the average rate was never over 11% (highest peak 10.8% in 1997).

If the difficulties of youth access to employment have increased, their permanence raises questions. *"The labour market is significantly more volatile for youth. These are particularly vulnerable especially in times of recession"* (Timotéo in Labadie, 2012, p 218). It has been demonstrated that youth position on the labour market is strongly related to economic cycles and tends to leverage the effects of these cycles. To put it in a nutshell, youth employment rises faster than the average active population in times of economic growth while the effect crises affects more strongly the employment of youngsters.

In addition to this sensibility to economic cycles, youth unemployment is strongly related to a territorial variable. As shown by Thomas Couppié's longitudinal work (2013), the economic downturns have had a stronger effect on youth living in deprived areas. With a higher proportion of low skilled and dropped out, youngster living in poorer quarters are facing major difficulties to enter the labour market. And this situation is not having any kind of

⁵ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics.

improvement since it has been shown that between youngsters exiting the educational system in 1998 and in 2007, the proportion of those exposed to long-term unemployment has raised from 11 points (Couppié, 2013, p.2). It should also be reminded that this situation affects young male more than young women.

Since the 70s the failure of public policy to youth employment, especially regarding low skilled youngsters, suggests the existence of structural mechanisms. As reminded by F. Lefresne (2012, p. 1), the tools of the youth employment policy can be pointed out as a first factor of this policy inefficiency: *"The role of public policy towards youth professional integration consists in special work contracts that apply to the market or non-market sector. State-subsidised jobs help young people in difficulties, but generally do not assist in promoting a real upwardly mobile career path and destabilise work contract standards. The main challenge for employment policy is to create and promote a new professional status for the entire body of active people based on secure professional pathways"*.

At what points of the transition to school and work are young people most at risk of falling into (persistent long-term, short-term or recurrent (in and out)) poverty?

Traditionally, poverty affected more the seniors: thus, in 1970, a retired out of four was poor. Today poverty has strongly rejuvenated and this reversal keeps questioning. In 2000, the rate of poverty for youth aged 18 to 24 years was 19.9% and it has reached 22.5% in 2009 while it was 13.5% for the entire population. Between 2005 and 2009, the poverty rate increased to 1,7 points for the 18-24 years, while at the same time the increase is of 0.5 for 65 years and over.

More than in terms of a specific moment in the transition onto the labour market, the risk of falling into poverty appears extremely important when young people leave their families. The main reason for this relies to the fact that, in France, young people do not constitute a specific target for social policies and benefits. Their protection is mediated through the one delivered to their families as reminded by one of our interviewees *"civil majority is not social majority"* (interview with INJEP) while explaining also that *"all financial support addressed to young people are given to families. Nothing is given directly to young unlike other countries. (...) At 18 there is civil majority, but youngsters remain somehow social minors. Up to 25 years, we have nothing. (...) So we find ourselves in a situation of increasing poverty for young people who leave their families before 25 years because before this age there is nothing for them, nothing at all!"* (interview with INJEP). Several interviewees addressed the same issue: *"The changeover can take place very quickly with a family break, a health problem which can not be dealt directly. These are very important points"* (interview with AFEV French NGO promoting volunteer action of students in deprived areas).

For orphans or without any family support, the risk of exclusion is tremendous, thereby confirming the absence of relay by social policies in case of family failure: *"A third of those who are homeless are under the ASE⁶ program. This is huge. That's it. (...) This is a topic that*

⁶ The ASE (Aide Sociale à l'Enfance) is a decentralized service placed under the authority of the President of the General Council (French political assembly for the Départements). Its main mission is to help children and their families through individual actions or collective prevention, protection and control against abuse. When a minor cannot be maintained in its

is very much addressed at the European level but very little in France" (interview with ONPES).

However, young people with a family can also be fragile without having broken up with their family ties: *"Parents' unemployment plays really strongly in the path towards youth unemployment. I think about all possible family breakdown phenomena. There we can see that there is a dynamic of 'familialization' of childcare. If a young - minor or major - is without family support or coming from a poor family, he/she is particularly exposed. And therefore the moments of rupture are in my opinion the most difficult"*(Interview with an expert of youth policies) .

Other factors may be playing a role in the risk of falling into poverty. For employed youth, this may depend on the type of employment contract, this interviewee expresses it quite clearly: *"For all that is part-time employment, (the youngster) remains in a significant precariousness and get trapped in it there because often this type of employment, cashier for example, are so divided in terms of hours that the person is not fully able to search another type of job. So he/she remains precarious. There are some who hold on, some who are progressing but there are also those who drop out of employment because the difference between a forced working time and a chosen one brings some youngsters to stay in the use of the safety net or social protection measures"* (interview with France volontaire) .

All factors combined, the most affected are the NEET: *"When we superimpose the map of France with young people who are unemployed and without training, NEETs in other words; it is clear that this map superimposes with the youth's poverty one in France. Because not only these young people do not have access to employment but they also do not have any other resources. There is a real correlation between the two"*(interview with INJEP) .

In the end, the French choice to grant state aid to families is widely involved, one of our interlocutors called "familialization" and describes it perfectly: *"It is the fact that public aid will tend to help rather parents than individuals themselves. Let's take the example of the tax relief systems for major students. There we help the parents, it does not help the child. Another example is the ability to gather RSA only after 25. It is assumed that children are under their family care. And so, suddenly it is a huge inequality factor because as we do not help people and believe that they depend on their families; when their family is not able to help because it is itself poor, or it is no longer there after a breakup, it is then that young people are the most at risk"* (Interview with an expert of youth policies)

5. POLICIES, INSTRUMENTS AND LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty (monetary resources, public services, social rights, training programmes, management tools

family, social child welfare is responsible for responding to all their needs. It is then allowed to be in a foster family or in a specialized social institution.

etc.) and what are the geography and scale of these, and which organisations mainly provide them

France's territorial organization is quite complex. State, Regions, « Départements (NUTS 3) », municipalities: between these levels of government the formal competences are often blurred. A reform is ongoing which objective is to transfer full competences over specific matters to each levels of territorial government and try to clarify what is generally described as a « mille-feuilles » (thousand layers' cake).

The first decentralization acts (1982 & 1983) were aiming at providing each territorial level with blocks of competencies. By this, the legislator wished to institutionalize coherence between the subnational entities' interventions. However, this initial determination has progressively vanished. Thus, for example, in education, government, through the Ministry of Education remains responsible for defining programs while the territorial political bodies manage the buildings: regions for high schools, "département" for colleges and municipalities for primary schools.

This tangle of skills has negative effects. First it is a source not only of many disputes, but also of inertia. Moreover, it can be considered as a factor explaining the disinterest of citizens in local life. Indeed, how passion for democratic debate at the local level can arise when young citizens are even not aware of who is responsible of what?

The policy for youth in France is a national interdepartmental policy which relies for its implementation on a network of partners, including local authorities, NGOs, etc. The French Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life is responsible for the policymaking and implementation of this broad policy. It relies for this mission, both on the development of policies and specific actions related to the field of youth and also on of mainstreaming concern for youth in the implementation of other sectoral policies. In fact, the policy of " Youth" is therefore based on many programs and actions, controlled and financed by various ministries. These programs are plural in their content and embodiment, centralized or decentralized, purely state-driven or enrolled in a conventional framework involving government agencies, local authorities or associations. This variety is reflected in the number of programs (46) and Missions (21) concerned. Cross-sectoral policy for youth is also related to other policies with a transverse "Youth" component, including urban, social, familial, justice, health, transportation and migration policies .

In the fight against poverty, the multiplicity of policy instruments, territorial scales and levels of intervention produces a complex system whose scarce visibility constitutes a factor explaining non take-up. The fight against inequality and poverty is far from being in France an integrated, uniform and Universalist system.

Regarding the territorial dimension, the main programs of this set of public policies bring together: multilevel programs, programs focused on one level of government, a scarce territorial regulation for education and employment policies and more generally a weak concern with social and environmental conversion factors.

Thus, policies affecting the upstream and downstream of the social and professional integration are mainly top down policies. If between the decision and the implementation a

degree of autonomy may exist – therefore some territorial differences can be observed – nothing guarantees that these differences are legitimized or explained by taking into account local specificities. Conversely, the decision may be out of step with the evolution of social issues or lacking resources: *"We have local services that are a bit battered and looking of a kind of second wind. And that it does not facilitate the conduct fully effective public policies"* (interview with ONZUS). Concerning the competencies devolved to local authorities (social action for “departments”, vocational training and lifelong guidance for regions), the design of policies also questions: *"What is complicated in fact to understand is the logic and values of these territorial policies for young people. It is very diverse depending on the willingness of local officials involved"* (interview with ONZUS).

The actions conducted in the fight against the poverty are so far based on a statutory-driven informational basis of judgment (IBJJ): the situation of the individual at time of its request for institutional care. Public authorities allocate resources if the social situation of the individual matches with the institutionalized criteria. On the one hand, the processes that have led the individual to his current situation are not taken into account⁷. On the other hand, space capabilities or real freedom of choice is not taken into account. Access to resources is based on individual characteristics but hampers the issue of social conversion factors.

What is the object/subject of intervention? Individual young people, communities, families, schools etc.? What policy areas do they cover e.g. family, education, employment, health etc.? Are the different government policy areas, addressing disadvantaged youth, integrated?

Regarding youth, transversality is on the agenda, but it does not target particularly disadvantaged youth. Thus in the "Priority to Youth" Plan, 'interministeriality' is a key dimension. In this new program aiming at reforming youth public policy, our interlocutors noted that: *"All the measures proposed are not targeted towards troubled youth, the measures are aimed at young people in general"* (Interview with INJEP). In an aging France⁸, addressing the difficulties that young people may encounter in their path to autonomy is a declared priority.

Whatever the level, transversality raises many implementation difficulties. Some of them sound like a refrain: *"it's been a long time since we talk about it. Since 1958 we are working on an intersectoral base"*. But divisions remain: *"In fact it is extremely closed to each other"* (Interview with an expert of youth policies). Knowing that for professional integration: *"The school trajectories are overwhelming (...) success is played from primary education"* and that *"popular youth (is) most at risk of school breaks"* (Priority to Youth Plan), some levers emerge.

On the first educational lever, many critics are formulated regarding the ministry of education or its agents such as described by this interviewee who gives us his feeling: *"We*

⁷ *"Do we have in our software the right way to follow the individual? i.e. to build a public policy that follows the individual in all stages of life. Finally we might in fact create the ruptures or stress them by creating programs that fail to do this binder in temporality"* (ONZUS).

⁸ Between 1975 and 2013, the proportion of 15-29 youngsters in the total population has decreased from 24% to 18% (INSEE).

feel that it is still difficult to mobilize the ministry of education! (...) It 's still not one of the easiest to mobilize" (interview with ONPES). On the same lever, whose centrality is recognized by all, recipes seem well known. This would be "trying to implement an effort in the direction of educational success during the primary schooling in order to try to anticipate a number of difficulties that are extra-curricular, but can be extremely punishing, so that no aggregation of difficulties accumulated throughout primary education are burdening the balance in secondary education "(interview with ONZUS).

Finally, during the last phase, the integration into employment may require some conversion factors not possessed by certain parts of the population. This is another lever: "*Beyond (education), programs that facilitate access to employment for those people who even when they are educated, well trained, may have more difficulty equivalent to finding a job" (interview with ONZUS).*

What resources are available for the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty (how are they funded and the duration of funding), who funds them, and what resources are available to beneficiaries?

A transversal policy is a public policy financed to a significant extent by the state, whose purpose involves several programs placed under the authority of different ministries. A Transversal Policy Document (Document de Politique Transversale - DPT) allows coordination by a leading ministry between actions managed by several ministries contributing to this policy. DPTs are annexed to the draft budget law of the year⁹. For each relevant policy, these documents contain the following: Objectives, budget, strategy of implementation and monitoring indicators. They also include a detailed presentation of the State's financial commitment to these policies on a triennial base.

The DPT for " youth policy" is placed under the leadership of the Minister of Sports, Youth, popular education and community life. For 2014, the draft of the Finance Act has 22 ministries involved in this DPT. Among them, the leading ministry manages two programs by itself. The most important ministries in terms of programs are: the Ministry of education with 5 programs and the Ministry of Solidarity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities with 4. These programs and departments contribute to the financing and implementation of 16 articulated objectives concerning eight public domains: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, volunteering, social inclusion, youth and the world of creativity and culture¹⁰. The main instrument of its implementation is the European program for mobility and cooperation entitled " Erasmus + " with an estimated € 13.3 billion for the period 2014-2020 (DPT, 2014 , p budget. 90-94).

Among a gross budget of 81,149,121,773 euros, the budget for youth and community life is of 216,615,860 euros. Credits to implement and support health policy social, sports, youth

⁹ Article 128 of the amended Finance Act 2005 No. 2005-1720 of 30 December 2005.

¹⁰ Then follow the ministries of "Research and Higher Education", "Labour and Employment", "National Development Finance and modernization of learning", "Equal territories, housing and city" and "Culture " with 3 programs.

Then the lead ministry " Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life ", that of the "Overseas", the "Securities" (2) and the " Action outside of the State " with 2 programs.

Finally, one program brings together the following ministries: "Solidarity , integration and equal opportunities ", " Health ", " Sport , Youth and community life ", " Agriculture, Food , Forests and Rural Affairs , " " Media , books and cultural industries" ; " Justice ", " Department of Government action ", " Veterans memory and links with the nation ", " Defense ", " Official Development Assistance ", " ecology , sustainable development and mobility."

and community life count for 92,038,660 euros. Youth and sports associations' mission is of 600 million euros. This amount does not include the local government budget.

What are the policy 'outcomes' for beneficiaries (object/subject of intervention: individual young people, communities, families, schools etc.)? What are the goals of the policy and how is success defined? Are they defined using an explicit "value perspective"?

As estimated by most of the observers, the results of the previous policies and programs for Youth would not permit (or would not work for) to fight successfully against social and territorial inequalities. Next, and in addition to Plan Priority for Youth, the General Commission for Investment (CGI) will support the emergence of integrated youth policies through a call for proposals¹¹. Hence, it will support programs addressing the issues of youth in a comprehensive, territorialized and coherent way, avoiding the pitfall of a juxtaposition of non-harmonized sectoral initiatives¹².

These policies include integrated youth will have to address the following matters that are all factor autonomy for young people:

1. Information and guidance;
2. Employability and the fight against the school and university leavers;
3. Development of innovative educational opportunities, cultural and sports , in addition to the school;
4. Emergence of a culture of entrepreneurship.

In view of its importance in France, the next Society WPs will focus on the study of the dropout phenomenon. That is why we propose here to give priority to the action taken in educational matters among a set of multiple youth policies and programs.

The results of the French educational policies that prevailed until then are inconsistent if not contradictory with the recommendations of the OECD. These recommendations are to reduce school segregation, "*best way to achieve equity*" (OECD, 2011, in Labadie, p. 72). In France, school is not only dedicated to knowledge transmission. As an institution, the French school is considered as founding the Republic. Hence this institution has a double mission: to raise the training level of future workers in a changing economy, but also to strengthen the Republican regime by forming enlightened citizens. Today access is no longer unequal; everyone can theoretically access the same level of education. The barrier is not put at the entrance; the sorting is done inside, through the cursus. And this is where the French educational policies are inconsistent with the recommendations of the OECD. The single college is a myth as the options inside the curricula promote differentiation and inequality. Social distinction is made in this way. The best-informed categories are better able to help their children choose the best curricula and pathways of excellence. Strategies within the college are elitist and the system allows them to exist. However, equality is a founder of the French school myth. Accordingly, questioning the institution is difficult.

¹¹ This call for project will benefit from the previous experience of the FEJ (Funds for Youth Experimentation).

¹² Budget Blue (preparatory documents): Sports, Youth and Community Life. Program 411: innovating projects for youth, PLF 2014 (version du 1/10/2013).

Regarding the current policy we do not have results. A new law was passed in July 2013¹³. This “refounding” Act aims to realize the commitment of the President of the Republic to youth and education as priorities of the Nation. It aims to (re) establish a fair school and reduce inequalities. At the time of writing, we can only hope that the results are equal to the stated objectives.

In terms of resources, the law confirms the creation of 60,000 new jobs in education. It establishes also a new training curriculum for the forthcoming teachers (Ecoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l’Education – ESPE). A public service of digital education is also created to provide online educational resources and software to teachers, students and their parents. On the other hand, territorial educational projects (Projets Educatifs Territoriaux – PEDT) are intended to allow local partnership supporting a reform of primary school rhythms that engages the French municipalities.

In terms of values, a new moral and civic education from primary school to the university, will aim to "make students acquire the respect for the individual, its origins and its differences, for the equality between women and men and for laicism" ¹⁴.

Please highlight, whether a policy is somehow linked to programmes, initiatives or guidelines coming from the European level - be it for legitimacy reasons, be it because of financial incentives /funds which can only be used if adequate programmes are developed, etc.

Regarding the relationship with European policies, the first attempt to define a "youth policy" in Europe, as presented in the 2001 White Paper (European Commission, 2001) did not address key areas of "youth" policies such as education or employment, because they fall under specific directions, within or outside the jurisdiction of the European Commission. It was not until the publication of the European Youth Pact in 2005¹⁵ for these areas to be included in the youth policy. This process has accelerated within the recent years with the EU Strategy for Youth (European Commission, 2009) and the publication of "Youth on the Move" in September 2010¹⁶.

In France, the Minister of Youth is involved in the definition, implementation and monitoring of youth policies in Europe. Under the auspices of the Permanent Representation in Brussels, and in conjunction with the Prime Minister, the Minister represents France in expert groups and the Council of Youth Ministers. The Department supports the work of youth information in Europe conducted with the European Commission and of the Eurodesk network. It also contributes to the European Youth Portal. In addition, the Minister for Youth supports and participates in the Council of Europe, in particular within the European Steering Committee for Youth in order to foster intergovernmental cooperation to promote citizenship rights, democracy, cultural pluralism and mobility.

For what concerns the studied program “*Priority to Youth*”, some references are made to

¹³ Loi d’orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l’École de la République 9 juillet 2013, n° 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013.

¹⁴ Loi n° 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013 - Article 41.

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc1705_en.htm

¹⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/education>

situation of youth in Europe but no direct link is made in the official documents with the European policies. In fact, the term “Europe” is used 3 times in this 80 pages programming document and not to refer to any existing European programs for youth. A large partnership is proposed with public agencies, local communities, regional authorities, NGOs, etc. but significantly Europe is never mentioned as one of these partners. This program appears above all in the official publications as a national policy grounded in the promises of the presidential campaign.

5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?

How flexible are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty in meeting the differing needs of young people? Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of? What is the scale and scope of young people’s opportunities for voice? Can they opt out of a programme? Do measures and programmes seek to develop young people’s aspirations? Or do they aim to make them “realistic”, adapting them to the current labour market and social policy system?

The vast majority of youth (75%) believe that young people are not recognized or heard in society. The French plan for youth provides priority to promote and enhance youth engagement through "all accommodating institutions, especially those dedicated to educational or vocational training" (Priority to Youth Plan).

Progress are to be made as noted by the French Youth Forum, an organization recently created (June 2012) that brings together some of the youth organizations. Indeed, if in universities, colleges and CROUS (Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires), students sit in decision-making bodies dealing with issues directly affecting them, this dynamic does not concern the high schools, where student representatives have little place in the executive board or even within the CSE (Conseil Supérieur de l’Éducation – Higher Education Council). The secondary education’s democracy seeking occasionally the participation of pupils is still lagging behind higher education. Another example of exclusion is in the apprenticeship trainer (Centre de Formation des Apprentis – CFA). There are no apprentices’ representatives neither in the decision-making bodies inside the CFA nor at the national level.

For what concerns the political institutions, France has Europe's oldest National Assembly: the average age is 55 years. If it has not always been the case, the dynamics is confirmed with an aging parliament, which aggravates the generational gap and the feeling of contempt and condescension experienced by young people (75 % of young people do not feel respected by politicians)¹⁷. At a territorial level, the average age among regional councilors is 55, that of general councilors (département’s assembly) and mayors is more than 60 years. A few attempts of youth political assemblies at the regional or municipal level can be identified but they are more symbolic than really powerful.

¹⁷ JOC/CSA survey, april 2011.

Moreover, young people do not always know their rights. So they are often not aware of their possible participation in an election. An educational effort involving rethinking current approaches seems necessary.

Finally inside companies, union's stewards and staff representatives are often older than the average employee. Young employees are often in precarious situations, cumulating sequences of unemployment periods, temporary or fixed-term contracts, they are not able to stabilize or find a statutory place in the company allowing them to be represented. And for those who find a permanent position, they dare not to engage for fear of losing their jobs or not be given a chance in the unions"(First Notice of French Youth Forum, " Youth representation in France, " 20 June 2012).

To sum up, no institutionalized or formal forms of participation or voice is given to youngsters in education and employment policies. Youngsters and youth associations are not enjoying a positive role over the agenda setting, the decision making process or the implementation chain. The main barriers are related to a lack of status given to youngsters and a political/firm decision-making system owned by adults. The existing forms of representation (cf. supra) are lean and powerless. The only capability for voice given to youngsters can be identified only at the local level in the case managing relation and is highly dependent on the street level bureaucrats' discretion.

How important are external structural and social factors to the development and operation of policy and how are they incorporated e.g. employer needs, labour market conditions, discrimination and constraints. Has policy changed in response to the economic crisis? Did new actors emerge?

As we saw earlier in France the preferred approach in social policies remains familialist: the young are still considered dependent from their families until their 26th birthday. Under the Plan "Priority to Youth", a set of measures designed to empower young people will be tested.

The impact of social conditions on the individual's trajectories is extremely important in France. The school has expanded massively but not in a process of democratization: social origin and school rankings remain correlated. The economic uncertainty is one of the factors explaining the dropping out process.

For youth with disabilities schooling remains difficult. Beyond 16 years only 30 % of them are enrolled in mainstream schools, despite the law of February 11th 2005 institutionalizing an open access of children, adolescents and adults with disabilities to all public institutions. At the same time, in France the effects of the crisis on young people are increasing the gaps. Between 2007 and 2010, youth employment declined more than total employment (INJEP, 2012).

In this time of mass unemployment, the most educated scale back their position on the labor market. The less educated are thus losing scarce employment opportunities. The importance of graduate employability illustrates its importance.

5.3 Non-intervention (if applicable)

Are there instances where disadvantage is identified but not addressed by government policy e.g. policies are missing? Who is assumed to take responsibility when the state does not e.g. individual, family, third sector? Who identifies these gaps – government, third sector organisations, citizen's bodies, stakeholders within civil society etc.?

Before speaking of non-intervention, it is important to discuss the non take-up of ordinary programs. As theorized in France by the work of the ODENORE (Observatoire du Non-Recours aux Droits et Services), the non take-up takes three forms that are:

1. lack of information,
2. lack of demand and
3. lack of offer or refusal.

In our material, the first and second cases were widely reported including access to the Local Missions specialized in taking care of troubled youth and working on their social/professional inclusion. In other words and following the terms of the CA, the "social conversion factors " may be missing. As our interviewees mention regularly, it is not enough to create or give way to a program. Without an individual follow up, some youngsters miss what they are entitled to. The reason may be what one of our interviewees called their "social remoteness", which also calls for "*more flexibility in hosting what may be their first need*" (interview with France Volontaire) to reduce this distance to entitlement. Any public policy, be it housing, health, vocational training, transport, should consider the possibility of access to all. The transportation is very important to face the requirement of geographical mobility. When transportation are present, they can remain inaccessible for financial reasons, "*in a landlocked city served by buses (...) you are unemployed without special allowance, to take the bus you need a 3-4 zones (expensive) ticket*" (interview with France Volontaire).

In terms of non-intervention, it is above all the failure of existing devices that is deplored. Firstly, social minima and weak or lack of allocation to youngsters under 25, are questioned: "*How shall we consider that people may be excluded from a minimum income simply because they are young?*"(Interview with ONPES). As we already reported, the fight against child poverty and youth is still happening largely through family allowances. On the other hand, as we have also discussed, the early school leaving remains at a high level. On the employment policy side, an effort concerning deprived neighborhoods is still expected in terms of job creation, especially in areas of urban policy.

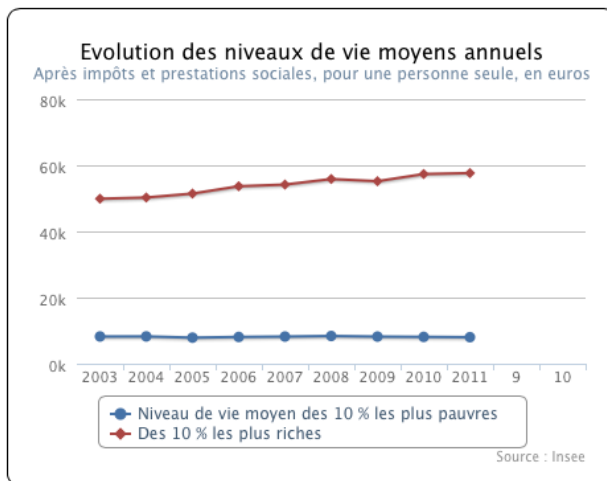
6. POLICY MAKING, IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty? Do they have an effective say in all three processes? And in practice who is actually involved in the development of the policy?

Poverty undermines the French republican ideal of equality. As its causes are many and interact, the number of actors involved is important. Fight against poverty requires taking into account the inequalities together, their complexity and their interactions. We know for example that the health inequalities articulate with employment problems, employment problems with the level of qualification, housing conditions influence educational outcomes, these housing conditions are themselves dependent on the level of household income, etc.. In France, the Observatory of inequalities noted a sharp increase in income inequality over the last 10 years¹⁸ :

Figure 3: Annual average standards of living's evolution



Beyond the income inequality, 10 factors of inequality have been identified as priorities for public action. Its general recommendations are:

1. Slow down the large wealth gap through taxation,
2. Develop a fair pension system,
3. Youth should not be combined with insecurity,
4. Another school to fight against social reproduction
5. An equal system of health for all,
6. Affordable housing near jobs,
7. Gender equality in employment through equality in couple
8. Popularize an elitist culture,
9. Stop believing that hell is other people,
10. Counteract social segregation between neighbourhoods.

Last spring (2013), the French government has politically shifted from right to left (presidency and parliament). By so doing and since most of the territorial bodies were already ruled by them, the left has won almost all institutional powers (national and local). Since the last regional elections (2010), the socialist party rules all the French regional

¹⁸ « The level of average annual life of the 10% richest is seven times higher than the poorest 10% in 2010. This ratio was 6.3 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the poorest won 33 euros per month, the richest 746 euros, an increase of 5.3% on one side and 19% on the other. But since 2008, the situation changes: the standard of living of the poorest decreases. Between 2008 and 2010, they lost 22 euros per month, while the richest have won 128. The first available data for 2011 confirm that the trend continued thereafter ... a situation of rising inequality driven by the richest growth differentials also linked to a stall at the bottom is passed » <http://www.inegalites.fr>

councils, except for one¹⁹.

The theme of inequality is on top of the actual majority's agenda and so is youth policy. Confronted with the challenges youth faces, the Prime Minister has mobilized all members of the Government and their agencies to collectively build a new youth policy.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Youth (ICJ) is the key organization of this new youth policy. This new Youth policy focuses on 13 priority projects:

1. Create a public information, support and guidance service that meets the diverse needs of young
2. Promote the success of all young people by fighting against early school leaving
3. Improve youth health and promote access to prevention and care
4. Facilitate young people's access to housing
5. Promoting access to employment for youngsters
6. Secure social and professional integration's paths for youngsters
7. Promote reintegration paths for young prisoners or subject to a judicial procedure
8. Foster youth access to sports, art, culture
9. Develop digital culture and youth access to new jobs related to Internet
10. Increase and diversify the European and international mobility of young
11. Promote and enhance youth engagement
12. Increase the representation of young people in public space
13. Strengthen the link between institutions and youth and the fight against discrimination

Thus, the crucial inequality pointed by the observatory plan responds somewhat health, school, housing and employment are well among the government's priorities. The precariousness of young raised by the observatory also would be supported by this new policy. For now, the objectives are defined. Convergence between objectives and implementation remains to be measured since it a brand new set of public policies.

How are the different government policy areas, addressing disadvantaged youth, integrated?

The first Interdepartmental Committee on Youth (CIJ) was held on February 21st 2013. Responsible for the organization of the Interdepartmental Committee, the Ministry of Youth, in conjunction with the Prime Minister, coordinated all the preparatory work. 24 departments have contributed to the preparation of the CIJ.

The work was coordinated by the Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life, particularly its direction of Youth, Popular Education and Community Life (DJEPVA) and INJEP.

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Ministry of National Education
3. Ministry for Educational Achievement
4. Ministry of Justice
5. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
6. Ministry for Family
7. Ministry Responsible for Persons with Disabilities and the Fight against Exclusion

¹⁹ Alsace (North-east of France, close to the German border).

8. Ministry for Equality of territories and Housing
9. Ministry for Urban Development
10. Ministry of the Interior
11. Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy
12. Ministry of Labour, Employment, Training and Social Dialogue
13. Ministry for Training and Learning
14. Ministry of Defense
15. Ministry of Culture and Communication
16. Ministry of Higher Education and Research
17. Ministry of Women's Rights
18. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
19. Ministry of State Reform of Decentralization and Public Service
20. Ministry of Overseas
21. Ministry of Sports , Youth , Popular Education and Community Life
22. Ministry for the Budget
23. Ministry for Social Economy and Solidarity
24. French Ministry for Small and medium sized enterprises, Innovation and Digital Economy

This policy targets all youth and not the disadvantaged youth in particular. The use of common law reminds a strong normative principle: public action has an obligation to ensure the effectiveness of universal rights to all. The right to work, rest and leisure, the right to take part in the community life, the right to education are part of these fundamental rights. France in the twenty-first century they appear as factors of inequality.

Complexity and efficiency

In its study on "social cohesion policies" (Vintage Reports and Documents No. 55, April 2013, the Centre for Strategic Analysis paints a rather pessimistic assessment of the actions taken so far by the State:

"If we examines social policies, there is an accumulation of often illegible programs, struggling to reach the most vulnerable. The rates of people who do not exercise their rights is higher than it is for RSA, the right to housing, or CMU (Couverture Maladie Universelle - Universal Health Plan). The idea of a State guaranteeing the rights seems to remain in many cases dead letter today...". The observations we are going to conduct within the Society Program will focus on the implementation of this new policy at the local level trying to find if the policy adopted by the new government finally insane this pessimistic overview.

6.2 Young people's participation in policy making

How is participation in policy making defined?

During the same period as the preparation of CIJ, the Minister for Youth conducted a series of meetings with some of the stakeholders acting in the field of youth, in particular the French Youth Forum and the CNAJEP (Comité pour les relations Nationales et internationales des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire), youth and popular education associations, youth organizations, elected officials in charge of the youth of the local authorities and the social partners. Since May 2012, The French ministry of youth participated in meetings with young people, their representatives and elected to bring its approach.

In France, the participation of citizens in public policy making is not usual. The French political participation scheme relies strongly on the role of elections and appears very limited to it. New participation schemes in relation to a more open democracy (program driven public debates, local referendum, policy forums, etc.) have been developed but they remain scarcely used. "*Since moons we wonder how people are associated*" (Interview with ONZUS). Following the same interviewee, it would not be due to a lack of will from the implementers, but perhaps more to a lack in youth representation at all levels (see above), "*We must find ways and means by which to design policies from the people. It is unbridled intellectually but not institutional term*". Or even lack of knowledge "*we are a country that is not quite like that, who does not know how to find ways and means by which ... which is not true in other countries, even European countries and this is a real issue*"(Interview with ONZUS).

Do young people have input and/or influence over the setting of priorities, design and implementation, both for government policy/programmes and the policy/programmes of other organisations? How, and to what degree, is the participation and voice of young people included? How is their participation encouraged? What are the barriers to their (greater) participation? What is the impact of their participation?

The French Youth Forum (Forum Français pour la Jeunesse) was established on 20 June 2012 by the will of the main organizations. It is managed and led by young people. The FFJ is an autonomous assembly.

This "space of representation of young people themselves " as he defines himself carries 4 main actions:

1. He produces findings and proposals on all topics affecting youth (health, housing, citizenship, mobility , ...);
2. He seizes the government on these themes and structures working in the field of youth and popular education and civil society;
3. He works for the recognition of youth-led organizations and is ruled by a majority of young people (below 30 years of age average). It supports the development of new organizations and works with various bodies (unions, associations, political parties, local authorities, etc.) on the importance of taking into account the views of young people ;
4. He maintains a watch on youth issues in order to disseminate this information internally and to partners and stakeholders in the field of youth

However, things in this area remain to be improved. The *Priority to Youth Plan* designed one year later raises in its findings the issue of social inequalities in youth engagement and of the poor mutual understanding between young people and various government agencies. In terms of youth engagement and relationship with institutions, much has still to be done. It is the object of the points 11 and 13 of the plan. The forthcoming evaluation will have measure the concrete effects of these measures in terms of their objectives.

7. SOCIAL INNOVATION AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW YOUTH POLICY

7.1 How is social innovation defined?

What are the characteristics of social innovation? What informs this definition? Do the definitions used by different stakeholder vary e.g. state vs. third sector definitions. Who decides on the predominant definition?

In a context of growing social needs and strong budget constraints, social innovation flourishes. Officially recognized by the French President of the Republic, François Hollande, at the closing of the Entrepreneurship Meeting, it is "*focused on the public interest, it consists in developing new responses to seemingly intractable social problems under the current market conditions and social policies: long-term unemployment, equal access to health care or housing, disintegration of the solidarity ties, malnutrition*". Its main characteristic is to involve in the invention, experimentation, dissemination and evaluation all actors and in the first place, the users concerned.

Is youth policy socially innovative? What are the goals of such innovatory and experimental developments? Which value perspectives are mobilised? Is there a space for experimental youth policies?

In view of what has been said above, insofar as youth policy was based on a phase of consultation with representatives of youth organizations, we can say that youth policy is relatively innovative. However, by not strongly involve the citizens in its design, it is still innovation in the midstream.

7.2 Supporting social innovation

What supports the introduction and implementation of greater social innovation? Where are new and innovative ideas developed, realised, tested and evaluated (in relation to youth related initiatives and instruments/programmes measures)?

Established in 2009, the Fund for Youth Experimentation (Fonds d'Expérimentation Jeunesse - FEJ) finances innovative actions for young people on the ground of calls for projects. The FEJ is led by a management board involving the concerned central government ministries (including employment, education, higher education, budget, youth, Overseas, etc.) and private partners involved in the process: the TOTAL Foundation and the Union of Industries and Trades Metallurgy – (UIMM).

Each project submitted must include an evaluation protocol defined at the same time as the draft. During the first years of the FEJ it was strongly recommended to use randomized controlled evaluations contributing to the development of this experimental method in France. Experimentations must be designed to meet the priority needs of youth. The end of 2013 balance sheet shows: 14 calls for proposals; and 29 experiments in progress. In total since its inception, the FEJ supported more than 550 projects, with an average duration of

approximately two years.

Projects submitted and approved carry on educational and vocational guidance, fight against school dropout, in work training, university dropout, employability, housing, youth rehabilitation under court, international mobility. Their evaluations are available online on the FEJ website²⁰.

After experimentation, and if positive, its evaluation should propose the modalities of transfer and generalization of the experiment. Finally, the lessons learned from different experiments are valued at conferences organized by the EFJ at the national level with all stakeholders and evaluators.

Who is allowed to develop and realise new ideas? Is it a top-down processes; is there a process of collective creation/co-production; is it a bottom-up and decentralised, networked process?

The FEJ is intended to fund experiments that provide added value compared to existing actions or programs and which belong to possible new public social policies. Therefore, any public or private body entitled to receive a grant from the State may submit a project. As project leaders are of extremely different organisational nature: Local Mission for professional integration of youth, NGOs, Chamber of Crafts, local state administrations, regional council, etc. The FEJ subsidizes only part of the project, the remaining part of the budget must be co-financed on the organization's own funds. The evaluation is funded entirely by the FEJ to guarantee its independency from the stakeholders.

Even if the FEJ has been a major operator of social innovation, all experiments are not supported only by it. Social innovation projects can obviously be worn outside of this framework.

The multiannual plan against poverty and social inclusion adopted in January 2013 introduces a new approach structured on the basis of five principles.

1. The first is a **principle of objectivity**: the society has changed²¹, the poor and precarious should not be considered as a marginal minority, more or less responsible for their situation, it is a sociological nonsense as well as an irresponsible policy. Four other principles are derived from the first.
2. The **principle of non-stigma**: People with social problems are not fixed; the frontiers of poverty are moving every moment. From ruptures to rebounds, each one is living in interdependence with the rest of society. It is the community of all citizens²² who have an interest in the fact that no one should be abandoned.

²⁰ <http://www.experimentation.jeunes.gouv.fr/72-les-resultats-des-experimentations.html>

²¹ Redistribution efforts made by the French government did not inhibit the growth of the income gap between the richest and poorest. The long-term unemployment is, to date, structural, and the permanent full time contract constitutes more hiring standard and work less efficiently protects poverty than in the past. The nuclear family is no longer the rule and isolation is gaining ground every day. The problems of sensitive urban neighbourhoods and rural areas in decline have not yet been solved. Persistent inequalities in access to care are directly related to social conditions, nearly a quarter of the 18-25 year olds are living below the poverty line, which is also the case for over a third of women living alone with children.

²² The principle has been to distinguish between "the poor" and "the general population", to end up with the denunciation of laziness or the dishonesty of modest households. People living in poverty or precariousness want to overcome their difficulties. They want to find a meaningful work, a dignified life, they want a quality education for their children, they want to see themselves again as full citizens, legitimate in the exercise of their rights.

3. The third principle is the **principle of participation** of people experiencing poverty or precariousness in the development and monitoring of public policies.
4. The **principle of fair law**, not to mention the issue of welfare fraud, supposes to tackle the phenomenon of non take-up of social rights and services, which has gained alarming proportions (especially because it is more looked at than before).
5. Finally, the **principle of deregulation** of social policies. Solidarity is not a separate subject in addition to the central public policies.

The interdepartmental plan involves 11 ministers, but also the contribution of many others, on public or transverse themes that they are responsible for. Each program proposed in action plan comes with a leader who is responsible for carrying out the entire program. Solidarity is now taking place in each sector of public action²³.

Beyond the public initiatives also exist private initiatives for social innovation. Without being exhaustive, we can mention that of " SOS Group²⁴". To overcome the crisis, the path of innovation, including social innovation, is increasingly explored.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Defining precisely a homogenous IJJ related to disadvantaged or vulnerable youth in France is almost an impossible task. The term "vulnerable" is not often used in the administrative and academic literature. The common term used in France to describe youngsters facing social difficulties is generally the word "disadvantaged" which is also used to describe deprived urban areas. In analytical terms this first observation show that youth vulnerability in France is above all conceived 1) in relation with the environment of youngsters (living in a disadvantaged area, family, social class, etc. makes them disadvantaged), 2) they are disadvantaged compared to others not *per se*. As we have shown even in etymological terms, the notion of disadvantage relies on a comparative perspective between a person and his group of belonging. The focus is on a collective/individual perspective rather than centered on the individual. So the IJJ in France is strongly related to the group a person can legitimately belong to. The definition of this legitimacy is the key point here. This definition is not left to the person itself but emerges from a societal categorisation process. The legitimacy of the categorisation is rooted in the process of definition of public action categories. The first consequences of this process is the importance of the legal status in the access to collective recognition and social benefits. Being young does not confer in itself a status. In fact, as shown in this report, the youngster's family plays a filtering role in youth policies. Until adulthood, the social benefits to youngsters are delivered to their family (except for a few measures such as housing help).

²³ This principle goes hand in hand with a change of practice towards a better coordination of the stakeholders, public, voluntary and private, around supporting people until their successful integration instead of a strict program driven logic.

²⁴ The statutory bodies of the three founding associations lead this group: Prevention & Treatment of Addictions, Home & Personal Care, and Alternatives & Insertion. It represents 330 institutions, 11,000 employees, 650 million euros in sales, an more than 1 million beneficiaries/year.

As a consequence, the policies dedicated to vulnerable youth are not integrated. They rely on a multiplicity of interventions highlighting the multiplicity of representations, stakeholders and policy instruments. The weak density of the youth as a public action category explains such a fragmented landscape.

However, all agree in defining the vulnerability of youth in relation to their schooling. In France, the importance of diploma and qualification makes it the key issue in terms of IBJJ. Thus, schooling strongly determines the employability of young people, the course of their careers, but also their social integration. In terms of CA, the social origin affects the ability to convert the educational resource into the “get a degree” functioning affecting their basic capability to participate in community life. In other words, French youth and educational policies are poorly informed by social and environmental conversion factors.

The freedom actually enjoyed by low qualified youngsters to choose the life they have reason to value is extremely small (unless withdrawal from the community is considered as a choice). Whether they rationally choose it or not, the early school leaving is the first step towards social disadvantage and vulnerability. From this yardstick, fighting against dropout is starting to promote the development of capabilities. This contributes to explain the choice made in actual youth public policies by the government to prioritize the education focus in the action plan *Priority to Youth*. Together with an ambitious education reform (“School re-foundation”), the fight against dropout is on top of the political agenda concerning youth policies.

Beyond this shift in educational objectives, the new programs for youth are also based on new schemes of governance. It aims at supporting projects with high economic and social value by fighting against the social and territorial inequalities. It strives to develop innovative large-scale partnerships between public and private actors. The main objective is also to promote the emergence of integrated youth policies able to propose new kinds of territorialized solutions in a comprehensive and coherent way.

In terms of participation, the traditional French policymaking process leaves very small room to individual participation. The overarching legitimacy given to the electoral process (representative democracy) tends to marginalize all other forms of political participation of citizens. The existing procedures of youth participation to policymaking are actually more communication artefacts than democratic participation.

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APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Key terms and definitions should be provided for the following issues. Definitions should be no more than 100 words in length and consider definitions across the national (and regional if appropriate) policy context - government, third sector/charities/NGOs, community groups, and interest groups – and any comparisons that can be made between these understandings.

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	<p>The policy for youth in France is a national interdepartmental policy which relies for its implementation on a network of partners, including local authorities, NGOs, etc. The French Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life is responsible for the policymaking and implementation of this broad policy. It relies for this mission, both on the development of policies and specific actions related to the field of youth and also on of mainstreaming concern for youth in the implementation of other sectoral policies. In fact, the policy of " Youth" is therefore based on many programs and actions, controlled and financed by various ministries.</p> <p>The age group covered by youth policies is in general the 16-25 years old youngsters for what concerns education, employment and training. Social rights are delivered to the families until 25.</p> <p>Despite some attempts to provide an integrated youth policy mostly at the local level (missions locales) and in relation to the importance of school performance in life-path building, the education policies are central to youth policies especially the issue of NEETs and early school leaving.</p>
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	<p>In France, social and professional inequalities are bound together with a starting point at school. The growing inequality generated among pupils by the French educational system (cf. PISA survey) paves the road to vulnerability for youngsters. Thus, school and social inequalities are reflecting and generating each other. If some dropouts are able to "bounce", the most troubled by social and professional integration suffer from the lack of degree. Borrowed from Latin "can be injured ", the term vulnerable starts with the lack of diploma as a grounding vulnerability factor.</p> <p>The common term used in France to describe youngsters facing social difficulties is generally the word "disadvantaged" which is also used to describe deprived urban areas. In analytical terms this first observation show that youth vulnerability in France is above all conceived 1) in relation with the environment of youngsters (living in a disadvantaged area, family, social class, etc. makes them disadvantaged), 2) they are disadvantaged compared to others not <i>per se</i>. As we have shown even in etymological terms, the notion of disadvantage relies on a comparative perspective between a person and his group of belonging. In that sense youth disadvantage and inequality are bound together in the French definition of vulnerability.</p>
Social innovation	<p>Social innovation has become a popular term since the last 5 years in French youth policies. The action of the Haut Commissariat pour la Jeunesse (quasi-ministry of youth during the Sarkozy era) and its financial armed wing the Fonds d'Expérimentation pour la Jeunesse (Fund for youth Experimentation) have initiated a large movement in that direction. However, the term generally used is not social innovation but "social experimentation". This point is important as</p>

	<p>experimentation makes a direct link with upcoming public policies. The idea is to experiment new youth policies and on the basis of their evaluation to generalize them. It brings also back a bottom up process in policy making.</p>
Participation	<p>In terms of participation, the traditional French policymaking process leaves very small room to individual participation. The overarching legitimacy given to the electoral process (representative democracy) tends to marginalize all other forms of political participation of citizens. The existing procedures of youth participation to policymaking are actually more communication artefacts than democratic participation.</p>
The Abilities of young people	<p>The term “décrocheur” (school leaver/dropout) is the most often used term to talk about vulnerable youth. This notion has been recently introduced in the French public space firstly with regards to insecurity and social violence.</p> <p>More recently the term NEET together with JAMO (Young with less opportunities) has entered the academic sphere without being integrated in the political discourse until now. It aims at pointing out the double penalty encountered by these youngsters caught out of the educational community and not able to enter the working one.</p> <p>There has been a long-term debate opposing qualification and competence. Qualification is said to be collectively guaranteed through diploma and certification while competence is supposed to be neo-liberal transferring the responsibility towards employability on the individual.</p>

APPENDIX 2: KEY GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES



Due to the recent governmental shift, most of the policy fields concerned by this study are now under redefinition:

- The education policy has been “re-founded” last summer;
- The youth policy is under definition after the launch of a general policy frame “Priorité Jeunesse” last February;
- The share of competences between the State and local authorities is currently being redefined;
- A large reform of professional training, guidance and career advice is on the Prime Minister’s desk including the transfer to regions of the competence over dropouts;
- A pluriannual plan against poverty and for social inclusion has been initiated in January 2013 and is still undergoing.

It is hence very difficult to give a clear description of the programs for youth, as they are not precisely defined yet.