



Deliverable 5.2: 11 case study outcomes on the regional case studies

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Introduction

Building upon and deploying the comprehensive theoretical, conceptual and empirical work in the SocIEtY project so far, deliverable 5.2 will give insight into eleven exceptional regional cases studies using **dialogue-centred, process- and participation-oriented approaches**. Herein our intention is to **enhance new forms of knowledge generation** involving researchers, practitioners and policy makers; and those young people who are subject(s) to and involved in social programmes and initiatives.

The aim of this work package, and particularly this specific core deliverable, is to **approach and take seriously youth perspectives in order to broaden and reconfigure the informational basis of judgements of justice (Sen 1990)** when considering policies and programmes targeted at young people. For this purpose, it is important to gain access to difficult phenomena such as

- **the formation and construction of aspirations,**
- **the collective contexts of learning in everyday life and institutional contexts or**
- **the scope of participation in public policy programmes from the youngsters' point of views.**

Referring to the conceptual framework that has been elaborated throughout the project, we may define **participation as “the exercise of influence on the entirety - which can be a political or a social entirety - and therefore it is always tending to the (re)arrangement of the social agency and the real freedom to express one’s aspirations, expectations, desires and make them count” (Ley 2013)**. Participatory research in its widest sense will be our methodological yardstick, **taking into account the different aspects and potentials of participation** (Vandekinderen /Roose 2014):

- 1) **Participation as a key element of our object of study.** E.g., we will address *the perspectives on participation that youth and other stakeholders have*; participatory processes and mechanisms; or policies and programmes, which claim to be participatory.
- 2) **Participation as a tool of research**, which may be present in different moments of the research design: definition of questions, data collection, data analysis, etc.
- 3) **Participation as transformation**, as our research process aims itself at expanding capabilities, exercising agency, and transforming of private troubles into public issues in order to expand the IBJJ.
- 4) **Participation as a theoretical concept**, which will be used in our analysis and discussions, and which should be linked with other key notions of SocIEtY as social innovation, inequality and disadvantage, and capability approach.

The eleven regional case studies have been carried out throughout Europe: in Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, France, the Netherlands and Romania. They cover a wide range of policy fields (i.e. youth work, transition management for labour market integration or the addressing of basic material needs such as housing) and address the particularities of different groups of young people (Roma, girls, young people with Muslim background, school drop-outs etc.).

Therefore, the common report structure for deliverable 5.2 will on the one hand (section 4) allow for flexibility in the description and analysis of the case studies according to its own particularities and specific context. Particular questions and emerging issues should, however, bring light to our common research question:

TO WHAT EXTENT AND IN WHAT WAY DO SOCIAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES TAKE THE PERSPECTIVES OF (DISADVANTAGED) YOUNG PEOPLE SERIOUSLY?

On the other hand, the reports build upon an interpretative and analytical section (section 5) based on two core concepts (aspirations and participation) being explored through the normative framework of social inequality that functions as a transversal dimension. In doing so, the main research findings/insights are processed according to a common framework, which can nevertheless be adapted to each case study. This approach will facilitate a common perception, reflection and an experimental comparative perspective going beyond a descriptive level.

Deliverable 5.2 is a compilation of all country-specific case studies. Each report follows the same structure including an executive summary, the description of the research design and research questions, a chapter on case-study specific research findings and a chapter that discusses and reflects findings from a methodological and theoretical point of view. Finally, all case studies conclude with policy-relevant implications.

CASE STUDY GERMANY: 3 Institutions – 3 Perspectives – 3 Attempts of Participation?

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1. Executive Summary

This paper presents a Capability Approach informed analysis of a participative research project undertaken with young people in three different institutions in Bielefeld. The basic idea of this multisided participatory research is to reach different (groups of) young adults via divergent institutional settings - namely a secondary school, a mosque and a youth club. This is based on the assumption that varying (institutional preformed) social constructions of reality and different conditions of participative attempts can be captured. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in. However, before the process of realising valued beings and doings, aspirations are formed and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where such realisation might occur. Additionally this threefold approach implies the pragmatic advantage that methods and approaches can be “tested” in diverse situations and can as well serve for an (internal) analytical comparison.

First of all, the area where the youngsters are situated will be sketched in its local policies and formal modes of participation (chapter 2). Based on the assumption that social policies and pedagogical institutions should act as enabling structures, the context in which capabilities might be realised has been scrutinised. This also means that capabilities ‘themselves’ were not identified in the course of the research. The social circumstances of the youngsters are briefly described by statistical indicators, acknowledging that a narrow quantitative view onto social inequality is not appropriate to a participatory approach as narratives, aspirations, expectations and desires of young adults should be in the core of research.

Afterwards the overall research design with its approaches and foremost its different settings is described (chapter 3). Three institutions are subject of participatory research in this case study encompassing divergent methodical approaches:

- (1) A secondary school called “Luisenschule”, which is part of a pilot programme called “Interesting Youth for Politics”. This is an elective study group with weekly meetings, where pupils learn about the processes of local policy and develop their own project (their own definition of a problem) and discuss it with local actors, policy makers and politicians. Main method of data collection was participatory observation during a school year (14 observation protocols & expert interview with school social worker).
- (2) A mosque (out of 4 in the area), which serves as a specific - not youth exclusive/focused – institution with different youth groups, where perspectives of religious youngsters can be gathered and discussed. Main method of data collection was an in depth group discussion (focus group) with a female group of youngsters.
- (3) A youth club called “HOT Walde”, which serves as an open meeting place and has different pedagogical offers (such as: gender-specific youth work, sports,

international cooking, excursions and tours). Main method of data collection was a participatory photo workshop (called “Eye Catcher Walde – Everything but Selfies”) with episodic interviews and participant observation during the participative process. Especially the photos and their shots served as a stimulus for these situated interviews. Walk-through inspections of the district with the medium of photography served for a more spatial analysis as well as an appropriation of the social world (8 observation protocols and 1838 photos from young adults and 127 photos from researchers).

The research findings (chapter 4) will be presented in three steps: Firstly, the three cases will be portrayed according to their institution and their youngsters. Secondly, they are analysed in relation to the programme in question and its setting and finally the cases are analysed in form and content and condensed in some empirical spotlights. At the end the divergent empirical findings will be summarized and roughly clustered on a societal, institutional, interactive and subject-orientated level (although acknowledging that these levels interrelated and the empirical findings can be seen from other levels as well). These three institutions differ with regard to the degree of institutionalisation and the subject-orientation of the participatory approaches: i.e. in open youth work the idea of voluntariness is an important and basic condition, school focuses on compulsory attendance, and religious communities set religious belonging in the centre of affiliation, but they still have issues in common (such as the Dethematisation of inequalities, age as a visible category & constrained ideas of the status and processes of democracy).

In a subsequent step these findings will be discussed, reviewed and reflected (chapter 5); the findings will be reframed with three analytical dimensions named creation, confrontation and constitution (5.1). While creation focuses the aesthetic/productive appropriation of reality and entails the issue of aspirations, confrontation focuses the interactive/intersubjective appropriation of reality and entails aspects of ‘the political’. Constitution as the third component focuses the corporative/societal appropriation of reality and entails social rights, inequalities and aspects of discrimination. This will lead to the 2 core concepts of the project, namely substantial freedoms of participation (5.2) and aspirations and the capacity to aspire (5.3). Finally a methodological reflection on Research Methods will conclude this chapter, which combines the participatory research agenda and the analytical concept of participation (5.4).

We will conclude with some broad policy recommendations.

Taking the three dimensions of creation, confrontation and constitution as an evaluative yardstick, (full) participation – in the sense of the SociEtY project and the capability approach – can only analytically referred to and practically guaranteed, if all of these three dimensions are acknowledged and addressed.

The Capability Approach focuses on the possibilities of individuals to realise what they reasonably value. In this sense, participation is not a must, rather it has to be reasonable and valued from the person’s viewpoint. Participation should not be a duty, but a real option.

Insofar institutionalized arenas where young people are allowed and empowered to voice their concerns and wishes and the professionals are obliged to take account of it, should be at the core of deliberative policies and democratic social services.

2. Introduction

This paper presents a Capability Approach informed analysis of a participative research project undertaken with young people in three different institutions in Bielefeld - namely a school, a mosque and a youth club. The basic idea of this multisided participatory research is to reach different (groups of) young adults via divergent institutional settings. This is based on the assumption that varying (institutional preformed) social constructions of reality and different conditions of participative attempts can be captured.

First of all, the area where the youngsters are situated will be sketched in its local policies and formal modes of participation. Based on the assumption that pedagogical institutions should act as enabling structures, the context in which capabilities might be realised have been scrutinised. This also means that capabilities 'themselves' were not identified in the course of the research. The social circumstances of the youngsters are briefly described by statistical indicators, acknowledging that a narrow quantitative view onto social inequality is not appropriate to a participatory approach.

After that the overall research design with its approaches and foremost its different settings is described. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in. However, before the process of realising valued beings and doings, aspirations are formed and institutions enable or prevent the creation of spaces where such realisation might occur. Hence, the research findings are based on the three cases (out of three institutions) and finalised with some cross-case dimensions. Afterwards the findings are reviewed from two analytical core dimensions of the Society project. This paper concludes with policy-relevant implications of the research findings.

Local area in focus: Ostmannturmviertel

According to the economic development in Bielefeld some of the areas in Bielefeld are supposed to be 'disadvantaged areas'. Among these so-called 'disadvantaged areas' are districts in the inner city centre as well as in rather suburban areas. 5 urban areas were selected taking recourse to statistical indicators from a small scale monitoring system. The study especially focuses on the inner city area and there again on a district called "Ostmannturmviertel"; it is one main residential environment in the inner city area of Bielefeld (77.051 inhabitants) with a total population of 7113 inhabitants (out of 327.097 in total). It is target of different political ambitions and programmes.

Thus the participatory study is located in the "Ostmannturmviertel". The rationale of this local area is manifold (see in detail Ley 2014), because of its

- *urban transitional status/ area in upheaval* - somewhere between gentrification and segregation. It is located between industrial wasteland, shopping areas and public housing (as there are a lot of urban revitalisations around the quarter, the question is how these affect the quarter, its inhabitants and how young adults perceive their neighbourhood),
- *heterogeneity*, concerning for example the migration status, generational status and social standing,
- *apparent social problems*, such as prostitution and drug usage in public spaces as well as a consumption room),

- “pretended” inadequateness for young people growing up in the district (less playing areas and the conspicuousness of the mentioned social problems),
- paid “political attention” - as there are several policy areas coming together (ibid.).

Local policies in focus

The chosen area was and is target of different political ambitions and programmes. As “disadvantaged young people” are partly tackled in urban policies, social policy, labour market policy (transition sector), educational policy, youth welfare and (shortened) youth work (esp. youth clubs), there exists no youth policy “of a piece”.

- (1) There is no decisive *urban policy* which either aims directly at improving the situations of young adults or explicitly involving young adults in urban development projects. But it is beyond controversy that urban rearrangements have an impact on the environment of young adults.
- (2) The rather community-orientated *social policy* is addressing all inhabitants; a particular focus on and the involvement and perspective of youth is lacking as well. An explicit addressing and handling of poverty (risks) cannot be observed; it rather seems to be a de-thematisation and a focus on daily life aspects. Anyhow this hints to the fact, that social policies (at least in the area of basic social care and hence as part of right-based or economic interventions) seem to be rather fixed.
- (3) The *school policies* on a local level are quite dodgy: The municipality is very cautious and somehow reluctant because of a decline in pupil enrolment and vague funding. The governing bodies of the school are more and more market-oriented and in an endeavour to increase school quality and the number of pupils. The justice-orientated initiative called “One school for all” has to assert itself in these micro politics of merocratic perspectives on non-selection, market orientation and pruned budgets. Parents and their children become a political football within these antagonistic interests.
- (4) Concerning the *labour market* position of young people, the access to vocational training (especially in the dual system) is the main dividing line on the labour market. The mentioned inequalities in the school system but also the insufficient training positions on the apprenticeship market are not only characteristic for the situation (and the expansion) of the transition sector, but they are relevant to all efforts within this context.
- (5) On the level of *youth work* (youth policy in a narrow sense), basic disagreement can be found between open youth work, which is more oriented towards personal development and social integration, and job-orientated youth social work, where a shift towards employability can be observed. Nowadays especially open youth work seems to be under pressure because of extended schooldays, consumeristic (and/or non-pedagogical) alternatives and no obligatory funding in times of municipal financial crisis.¹

¹ Noteworthy, while urban and social policies exert themselves for a gentrification and revaluation of this district, one can observe that there is much less effort in youth and school policy. This comes along with the blind spot in youth policy in general. Quite remarkable is that every policy has its own geographical sections/segments and figurations and therefore a common (statistical) assessment and informational basis of the situation of young adults is hard to reach.

Youth policy faces the ambivalence that on the one hand political responsibilities are not clear cut (there is no youth policy “of a piece”) and on the other hand every policy field can influence the situation and opportunities of young people (i.e. urban policy). Furthermore there exists no genuine (and holistic) youth reporting in Bielefeld, which tries to cope the different spheres of action, which affect young adults and hence maps the challenges and tasks for youth in general and for a youth-friendly community. Young adults are perceived as the population group “somewhere in between”. A perspective on societal conditions of growth (which are shaped by forms of institutionalisation and situated conflicts) or a decisive perspective on unequal conditions is not captured.

Young people in focus

Indeed a broad perspective of young adults in local policies and a visible youth’s perspective in local policies - as well as in this area in particular - is missing. Anyhow this socio-spatial focus can be seen as a starting point in participatory research, but it shouldn’t be seen (and it sometimes appeared) as a constriction of perspectives.

Almost all involved institutions have/had a focus on youngsters between 14 and 16 years (and sometimes even younger). This hints to the fact that a lot of pedagogical offers are only made for older children or young teens and could be read as blindness for needs of older youngsters. Then again a lot of older youngsters might be happy not to be bothered by social workers or having other interests (issue of “boarder experiences” in WP4).² At least an institutionally driven approach of field work did not reach the young adults and an additional approach with interviewing youngsters “from the street” served as first insights, but did not merge into an interactive group constellation.

The vulnerability of young adults in the local area is illustrated by statistical indicators, in particular the need of social benefits (and their labour market positions). In comparison to the municipal average (11.4%) the rate of persons in need of social benefits is considerably higher (16.9%). Compared to other age groups and the municipal average especially the high rates of youngsters from 15 to 17 years (48% !) in need of social benefits are striking. Anyhow a narrow statistical and classifying view onto disadvantaged youth is not appropriate to a participatory approach, as narratives, aspirations, expectations and desires of young adults should be in the core of research.

² We discussed with several professionals how we can reach or rather bring in older youngsters without falling into the same trap. But a low-threshold and voluntary approach seemed to be quite difficult.

3. Research questions and research design

The basic idea of the participatory research is to *reach different (groups of) young adults via divergent institutional settings*. This is based on the assumption that varying (institutional preformed) social constructions of reality and different conditions of participative attempts can be captured (cf. as well the concept of ‘positional objectivity’: Sen 1993). Additionally this has the pragmatic advantage that methods and approaches can be “tested” in diverse situations and can as well serve for (internal) analytical comparison.

The overall research question of the SociEtY project is *“To what extent and in what way do social policies and practices take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously?”*

In order to avoid a kind of top-down perspective, which might be implied by this overarching policy-driven question, explicit sub questions have been developed which underline and start explicitly from the youngsters’ perspective - and that are not directly bounded by a policy perspective. This report comes from a youngster’s view and only with this originary perspective we can fully answer this overall question. This entails both “social innovation” understood as something deviant and ideas that are not (yet) thought nor fully acknowledged by policies.

- To what extent and in what way do young people perceive their possibilities to influence the social and political entirety? This entirety can entail the society as such but moreover the social worlds the youngsters are involved in. This exercise of influence can be seen as “participation in polity” which means participation with regard to the community the youngsters feel they belong to or which they are belonging to due to their role as services users.
- How do young people describe and fulfil their “agency”? How do they relate their exercise of influence to the institutions they are involved in or to preformed perspectives of the institutions?
- How do young people depict and project their aspirations? How do they relate their aspirations to circumstances and social conditions (e.g. discrimination and social inequalities)?
- Which ideas and concepts of “the political” (especially apart from Realpolitik), “democracy” and “formal modes of participation” emerge in the participatory (research) processes and deem the youngsters valuable?

Three institutions are subject of participatory research in this case study encompassing divergent methodical approaches which will be further described in the next chapter:

- (1) A **secondary school** called “Luisenschule”, which is part of a **pilot programme called “Interesting Youth for Politics”**. This is an elective study group with weekly meetings, where pupils learn about the processes of local policy and develop their own project (their own definition of a problem) and discuss it with local actors, policy makers and politicians. Main method of data collection was **participatory observation** during a school year (14 observation protocols & expert interview with school social worker).
- (2) A **mosque** (out of 4 in the area), which serves as a specific - not youth exclusive/focused – institution with different youth groups, where perspectives of

religious youngsters can be gathered and discussed. Main method of data collection was an in depth group discussion (focus group) with a female group of youngsters. Main method of data collection was an in depth **group discussion** (focus group) with a female group of youngsters (special focus of co-researchers from University of Vechta).

- (3) A **youth club** called “HOT Walde”, which serves as an open meeting place and has different pedagogical offers (such as: gender-specific youth work, sports, international cooking, excursions and tours). Main method of data collection was a **participatory photo workshop** (called “Eye Catcher Walde – Everything but Selfies”) with episodic interviews and participant observation during the participative process. Especially the photos and their shots served as a stimulus for these situated interviews. Walk-through inspections of the district with the medium of photography served for a more spatial analysis as well as an appropriation of the social world (8 observation protocols and 1838 photos from young adults and 127 photos from researcher).

Institutional setting	Special Focus	Data collection
Secondary school	Pilot program „Interesting Youth for Politics“	Participatory observation
Mosque	Female group of youngsters	Group discussion
Youth club	Initiated Project „Eye Catcher Walde - Everything but Selfies“	Participatory photo workshop

Table 1: Research design

These three institutions differ with regard to the degree of institutionalisation and the status and limits of a subject-oriented participation, especially concerning the idea of voluntariness in open youth work, the attendance in compulsory school or the closeness of a religious community.³ Insofar these varying institutions and their preformed social constructions of reality and different conditions of participative attempts have divergent impacts on the status and the exercise of influence of young people.

One important aspect of a participative approach is to provide adequate ways of alternative (somehow aesthetic) *expression and production*. It should serve as one way of the appropriation of the subject matter, bringing more creativity in as well as going beyond an academic bias. As such, photography served as a medium of data collection and as a “product in itself”. However, it has to be taken into account that such a procedure implies a kind of ambivalence with the regard to its participatory content: on the one hand the process of negotiations with young adults is of high importance for an ambitious and

³ In this respect it might be more adequate to speak about a “research on participation” (with the opportunities of a participatory observation and “going along in the background”) on the one hand or about “participative research” (with the opportunities of observing participation and aspects of “being active”, “making a project”) on the other hand. These two conceptions might be exemplary found within the school programme or within the youth club (see as well the methodological reflection in chapter 5).

serious participatory approach and on the other hand the event is kind of prearranged with concrete photo products at the end.

This ambivalence seems to be an inherent part of participatory research as it is always done (also) for the benefit of the researchers and their relevance system and of different other stakeholders (not only) within participatory research processes. One way of handling this ambivalence is to decide for a set of declared methods of data collection on the one hand and methods of participation on the other hand, which are more dedicated to representation (and transformation); so at the end both of these strategies are not shadowed or covered with the principles of the other. Anyhow we decided against this way of a strict division and tried to keep our research agenda and its visibility to a reflexive and discursive process.

Last but not least, several gatekeepers not only grant the access to young adults, but they are part of the research and its outcomes and are making the research findings more visible. Besides the young people, the following stakeholders were involved in the research:

- local policy makers,
- community workers, youth workers, school social workers
- district's professional conference,
- Inhabitants' council.

4. Research Findings

The research findings will be presented in three steps: Firstly, the *three cases will be portrayed* according to their institution and their youngsters. Secondly, they are analysed in relation to the programme in question and its setting. Finally the cases are analysed in form and content and condensed in some empirical spotlights.

Case 1: 'Interesting youth for policy' in a secondary school

Institution & Youngsters

This elective study group belongs to the secondary (middle) school called "Luisenschule" situated in the Ostmannturmviertel. This group is part of a pilot programme called "Interesting Youth for Politics". This study group meets weekly and involves thirteen youngsters in the age of 15 and 16 years - mixed concerning gender and migration - which are accompanied by two social workers. Its objective is to learn about the processes of local policy, to develop an own project (including the definition of a problem and figuring out an own view on the "political") and to discuss it with local actors, policy makers and politicians. Main method of data collection was participatory observation during the school year (14 observation protocols).

Programme & Setting

The involved pupils of this programme have different topics they work(ed) on. In the beginning of the programme questions like "Is a teacher justified to take away mobile phones from students?" or the difficult traffic situation in front of the school has been discussed (also partly) with policymakers and local politicians. In the current school year the students developed and tried to write a city guide for young asylum seekers which are part of the school as well (because of their school attendance). They joined a school competition for external motivation, self-positing and the idea of getting public. This city guide can be understood as the attempt to gain an own perspective, which might be fruitful for others. Anyhow, an underlying basic issue within this study group is always the question of voluntarism as this group is part of schooling and the youngsters perform in different aspects as pupils. Social workers have to work on motivation and bring in different tasks for further action and sometimes perform as teachers.

Furthermore the group initiated walk-through inspections of the district with local politicians and they asked them to show their most interesting places for youngsters. Afterwards they discussed youth relevant issues (see empirical scene 1: "The confrontation with local politicians – Selected ways and prepared questions"). Last but not least they discussed basic democratic issues within their group (see empirical scene 2: "The discomfort with democracy and the vote for dictatorship").

Empirical spotlights

Let us highlight five aspects, which were not only crucial for this study group but as well for participatory attempts in general.

- *The obligation to choose and the question of voluntariness*

The study group is elective and the youngsters had to choose within a range of different offerings (such as home economics, sports etc.). The programme is adapted to the normal and habitual school frame: it is located in the class room, arranged within the opening and ending of the school bell, hence youngsters are doing their “pupils’ job” (Breidenstein 2006) and as such imagination and creativity is often bounded to the reality of and in school. This aspect is not only characteristic for the status of school (and its expansion), but it is relevant to all participatory efforts within this context. This structural barrier not only limits the possible effects of institutional and pedagogical efforts but as well the transformative character of participation.

- *The external drive of competition as self-positing and public-a(c)tion⁴*

Within the excursive process of setting up an own issue and defining the own problem the study group wanted to work on, the social workers came across with two countrywide school competitions: (1) a photo project with focus on Europe and (2) a project for an international youth exchange (both had a little prize money). Both competitions gave an external drive to the concretion of issues, canalised topics, resources and group dynamics and finally opened for new objectives. While for the first competition a peace dove and a lot of hands should represent an idea of Europe, the second one ended up in a touristic city-map for young asylum seekers (see below). The competition as such served as a motivation generator in the beginning - foremost for the social workers as they always tried to keep track - but did not work till the end, as both deadlines of the competitions were defaulted. It can be argued that the external drive did not pass on to internal motivation and as such objectives in participatory projects are fragile and question the whole process.

- *Defining the objective: The touristic city guide as an attempt to self-location and gaining an own perspective – for others⁵*

Within the aforementioned in-depth process of setting up an own issue, the city map for young asylum seekers - which are part of the school themselves – seemed to be an adequate and negotiated objective. In several lessons they collected information – walking with a camera through the area, looking for information in the web and in guidebooks, conducting two walk-through inspections of the district with local politicians – and tried to write a youth-orientated guide. This city guide can be understood as the attempt to gain an own perspective which might be fruitful for others. But in the writing process it was difficult for the youngsters to build up a guide, rich in content with popular places and which is still interesting for youngsters in terms of “universalistic” interests for youth. At the end the guide remained a descriptive information source, which was mainly fed with data from Wikipedia and some general photos.

- *Scenery 1: The confrontation with local politicians – Selected ways and prepared questions⁶*

⁴ in German: Die Idee des Wettbewerbes als Selbstsetzung und Veröffentlichung

⁵ In German: Der Inhalt - Ein Stadtplan als Versuch der Gewinnung einer eigenen Perspektive – für andere

⁶ In German: Die Konfrontation mit Kommunalpolitikern – Ausgewählte Wege und vorbereitete Fragen

Part of the appropriation of the local area (the Ostmannturmviertel was one of the first issues on the agenda in this working group) was the invitation of local politicians; a man from the green party and a woman from the social democrats accepted the idea and initiated their own walkabout within the area. While the women predominantly showed social work institutions (local transition management institution, youth club, jazz club, women's club, home for young people seeking asylum) the man showed "hidden" places (basketball court, open places, historical houses of resistance). After that the youngsters had the explicit opportunity to ask questions to the politicians and to debate about current issues. Quite remarkable was that they hid behind prepared questions and mainly read them out. This again showed the imbalance in power and self-efficacy which can be seen as a main barrier of the appropriation of the political. Furthermore this meeting turned into private questions (i.e. how do you deal politics and private life?) and a public debate about current problems and issues disappeared.

- *Scenery 2: "The discomfort with democracy and the vote for dictatorship"*

Starting point of a lively debate about democracy was the demand to begin earlier with the study group (shortening lunch time and ending earlier). Only one girl said that this suggestion does not suit her and consequently the social worker skipped this proposal explicitly and theatrically - due to the "protection of minorities". After that a big discussion about the motives and legitimate rationales of the girl came to a public debate. A lot of the others did not believe her reasons - in fact she just wanted to have a longer lunch time and didn't want to end up in stress. Hence there was a long-lasting debate about the limits of the protection of minorities, the historical offenses against minorities (mainly in the Nazi regime), the basic definition of a minority and finally the basic principles, advantages and disadvantages of democracy. Democracy is often seen as a constricted space of opportunities (!) and participation is then reduced to ideas of social engagement. The debate ended up in a role-playing where several youngsters ran for the election of a dictatorship (sic!) and campaigned for their good governance and straight decision-making.

To sum up briefly, especially in school one can see that participatory efforts are bounded to its institutional rationales and pedagogical (hidden) agendas. Participatory approaches conducted at schools seem to fall more into the category of "involvement" and a concept of "learning to participate" rather than "participation as a collective and transformative learning process" (Vandekinderen/ Roose 2014).

Case 2: Young Muslims in the Ostmannturmviertel

Institution & Youngsters

The target group of the second case were young Muslims in Bielefeld. The first reason for choosing young adults with a Muslim background as target group is the high migration rate in the Ostmannturmviertel in comparison to the municipal average. The second reason is that Islam is represented by four mosques in this area. In addition, current research suggests that young people with a migration background, especially adolescent Muslims, make specific experiences of disadvantage and discrimination in their everyday life, in

institutions and on the labour market. The mosque sees itself as an Islamic institution, in which skin colour, nationalities, origin and social status should be effectively meaningless. According to participatory and democratic research we have decided to use focus groups to include the voice of young Muslim adults concerning their living conditions, identity constructions and perspectives of participation.⁷

Programme & Setting

One in-depth group discussion has been conducted with six female young adults who meet once per week in one of the mosques in the Ostmannturnmviertel. The topic was: Daily life and political issues.⁸ The young women are between 14 and 16 years old, have different nationalities and the same religious background. The groups were initiated to give young Muslim women their own space to exchange their views on political, daily life and religious matters.

Main topics discussed in the focus groups are:

- (the absence of) mini-jobs and in this respect especially financial independence of parents, the possibility of being able to afford youth specific consume products,
- discrimination and inequalities because of religious belonging (i.e. job perspectives as young Muslims wearing a scarf),
- Islam presented in the media and the consequence for their perception of agency and lack of information concerning the formal modes of participation,
- Aspirations are mainly brought up with the issues of societal performance, educational carriers and working perspectives (and thus conventional concepts of freedom) as well as equal treatment in the German society.
- Feelings of Not-Belonging and Being Marginalized: The findings show a connection between well-being, religion and experiences of identity and belonging. The participants articulate experiences of not being accepted, not being equals, and not being understand, while at the same time unable to influence media reporting about Muslims (“we are defined exclusively in terms of our religion”, “we are not being asked”, “the media define the image”). This shows a feeling of powerlessness vis-à-vis media that depict a distorted image of Islam.

Empirical spotlights

Let us highlight three aspects, which were not only crucial for this study group but as well for participatory attempts in general.

- *The absence of mini-jobs as a hindrance of opportunities and the exercise of agency*

In the focus group the girls pointed out that they would change the opportunities for mini-jobs, if they had the possibility.⁹ In the discussion they complained about the lack of mini-

⁷ In these focus groups young adults get the opportunity to develop collective opinions. The benefit of this interaction for the young adults is to discuss and exchange their perspectives. The researcher's role is only to give impulses for the discussions and not to influence them.

⁸ Several issues in this group discussion were tackled, such as: How do they understand participation in general, see current possibilities and desires of participation and their perception of self-efficacy? Which perspectives of and experiences with school, vocational training, labour market and future aspirations do they have? What about the meaning of the mosque and religion in general for their lives? etc.

⁹ “But this would be something, wherewith all the youth would be satisfied with, because, currently it is like this, one has many one has siblings, and the parents cannot like for everyone; one hundred Euros for you

jobs for students under the age of 18. Having a job means for the girls firstly, being independent of their family's economic situation and secondly, being able to afford youth specific consume products.

Due to their own earned money the girls anticipate a growing agency because they are able to fulfil their wishes their parents cannot fulfil. They expressed that they do not feel as being taken seriously and feeling underestimated by the adults' world. Through the empirical date it becomes visible that especially the hierarchal relation between adults and youth gets to the forefront when young people trying to realized their ambitions in different social spheres (such as the labour market in this case).

- *Wearing a headscarf and its consequences for agency*

In the group discussion with the girls it was remarkable that wearing a headscarf seems to be a factor with various consequences for their daily and future life.¹⁰ Especially as visible Muslims they perceived stigmatisation and unequal treatment in the German society. Even if this inequality is remark strongest on a symbolical and interactive level, they anticipate impacts on future working opportunities. Because of this knowledge the girls ponder if and when the right point in life comes to wear a headscarf without losing their agency (especially on the labour market). This feeling of being capable to make own decisions in life is therefore limited through their belonging to the Islam in the German society.

- *Significance of the mosque and (belonging to a) religion*

The mosque is a place for the girls to get in contact with other Muslims and to deal with the Islam. Furthermore to this religious function the Mosque is used as a place of retreat from experienced discrimination points to positive effects of religion for well-being under current societal circumstances and a place for various activities. This includes functions, which are regularly part of institutions of social work (education, help with problems, having fun). The girls complain the lack of reward this inofficial form of social work is paid from governmental side.¹¹ In addition the mosque is an important place for the girls to illustrate themselves as Muslims and active members of the society in the area.

Religion as an explicit resource develops to a relevant category. Belonging to a religion means having a space where one is among like-minded others and "need not explain oneself". The youth associate their religious affiliation and associated institutions with a "good feeling" because they are with the "people like us" among whom there is no discrimination. The positive effect of religion on current well-being is explicitly contrasted

per month one hundred Euro for the other per month and currently it's like this, all have to present themselves from one's best side showing the best brand and so on (.) isn't it" (Girls group, Bielefeld 2014, l. 71-75).

¹⁰ "For example, when I started wearing a head scarf I have, äh before, I already dealt a lot with the question what influence this might have and already at that time I was aware that I cannot do all the professions (2) but I nevertheless simply did it. Yes" (Girls Group, Bielefeld 2014, l. 966-969)

¹¹ "For example that we're doing this Islam lessons for the students as well ähm that they will somehow get financial assistance, for getting specific material for them, because I think that this is the state's task to arrange this. Anyway now they doing this but already, earlier, that one gets Islam lessons somehow and that we somehow already took this responsibility and they could have supported us already earlier" (Girls Group, Bielefeld, 2014, l. 1112-1118).

with the experience that “in Germany Germans are preferred”, which also shows that these different categories are intertwined and contingent.

To sum up briefly, here participation is strongly linked by the young muslim girls to aspects of “being part of”, being part of the labour market and being part of different social spheres. Furthermore Participation and inclusion are fragile buildings and highly dependence on their religious belonging.

Case 3: Participatory photo workshop “Eye Catcher Walde – Everything but Selfies”

Institution & Youngsters

The third case study is located in the local youth club “HOT Walde”, which serves as an open meeting place for young people with different pedagogical offers (such as: gender-specific youth work, sports, international cooking, excursions and tours etc.). The club is in the middle of the area next to a playing field and opens in the afternoon. Its main addressees are youngsters from 12 to 18 years. As such this place seemed to be adequate to serve for an open workshop for all youngsters of the area.¹²

Main method of data collection was a participatory photograph project with episodic interviews and participant observation during the participative process. Walk-through inspections of the district with the medium of photography served for a more spatial analysis as well as an appropriation of the social world.

Action & Setting

This media project was organised together with social workers and local media experts from a micro budget within local urban policies, where everyone can apply for on condition that it has something to do with the quarter.¹³ Within two weeks an open participatory photo project called “Eye Catcher Walde – Everything but Selfies” was launched for all young adults of the quarter and the addressees of the youth club. All in all six days (Tuesday to Thursday) have been allocated to the project including some brief instructions for different methodical approaches (details and long shots, visual illusions, light painting) and variable themes per day (ugly and beautiful places, hidden places, the area from above). Photography served as a low-threshold and multi-sited medium to gain young adults’ perspectives on their living environment and social conditions. Especially the photos and their shots served as a stimulus for situated interviews. An exhibition taken place in the youth club among the young people made their perspectives public and visible; 223 out of 1838 photos were selected for this exhibition and clustered in 12 main topics.¹⁴ A second exhibition in the community centre is planned in order to reach a wider public.

¹² Notwithstanding nowadays open youth work in general and this place as well seems to be under pressure - and sometimes in an identity crisis - because of (1) extended schooldays (in the last years all-day schools were massively expanded) and the question if and how youth work should cooperate with school and deliver after-school supervision in the afternoon, (2) consumeristic (and/or non-pedagogical) alternatives and (3) no obligatory funding in times of municipal financial crisis and the reduction of jobs and places (see Lange/Wehmeyer 2014)

¹³ Insofar we made a request for the fees of the media experts and large-sized photo development.

¹⁴ The twelve topics are: Action & Movement, Perspectives & Experiments, Everthing but Selfies, Kesselbrink, Ostmannurm, Making of, Lightpainting, The photographers, The hood, The hood from above, The hood is colored, Ways through the hood.

Empirical spotlights

Let us highlight three broad aspects, which were not only crucial for this photo workshop but also for participatory attempts in general.

- *A project in the open youth club: An attempt of “structuring the unstructured”¹⁵*

Once again the question of voluntariness arises - or to make it more specific: rather the question of reliability and steadiness than the question of engagement. During the preparation of the workshop the question was if it might be useful to arrange for binding registrations with the aim to allow for a stabile group to work with. As such binding registrations could be a barrier of entering this offer the decision was to do without it. Concern was to continuously allow for short- and long-term involvement of young people of the area as well as not to set the goal of the photo workshop at the top of participative research. As a result several youngsters dropped in and out, the position of the media experts was not that clear (some thought there is new staff around which can hand out some equipment) and it was difficult to establish a special focus and to build up a coherent series of topics. At the end of the project several youngsters asked us, when we will come back and what we will do next, which showed us once again the anachronistic crux of the short term project orientation in such a trust-related business. Hence, appropriate conditions for participative processes seem to be to facilitate a broad open access for the young people (not target orientated) on the one hand and trustful and constant relationships on the other hand.

- *Approbation of the photographic view and creativity as a basic foundation of participation*

Some basic instructions of the media experts (the golden ratio, effects of lightning and zooming) and playful trails and errors of the youngsters were already sufficient to gain collectively new insights and new perspectives onto their surroundings (the often mentioned “wow effect”). Although a lot of young people are making daily photos with their smartphones, they did not know basic effects of camera settings. Insofar this indicates an aesthetic dimension and the cultural/productive appropriation of reality through this medium.

One main issue raised by the workshop and the youngsters as well, was the common idea of “selfies” as a mode of shooting (subtheme of the workshop was: “Everything but selfies!”). As such a reflexive process about egocentrism and the self-placement in social contexts took root; i.e. we compiled a series in our exhibition about these distancing effects, where only body parts were shown in public spaces.

In this respect the aesthetic appropriation of reality can be best described in the broad concept of Bildung: “Bildung points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and *aesthetic concerns*. (...) It entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. Bildung, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the ‘good life’, of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creation“ (Bleicher 2006, S. 365).

¹⁵ In German: Das Projekt im Jugendzentrum: Der Versuch einer Struktur im Strukturlosen

- *Creativity/Participation and the risk of neglecting disadvantages and inequalities*

Especially when looking at the workshop-related task of searching for “ugly things and places” in the area as well as the photo exhibition in general, inequalities (in its broadest sense) disappeared and were mainly invisible.

Ugly sides and marginal issues reified in obvious dirt, dog mess, crowded trash cans etc.. The participants did not deal with the obvious social problems, instead a kind of group-focused enmity (“They are all junkies.”) could be observed in that context. All in all the photography sceneries and situations were polished, alienated and somehow cultivated; minor issues were not exposed and as such photography did not work as a medium of critique (as it was intended from the researchers at the beginning).

To sum up briefly, especially in open youth work participatory efforts seem to be more bounded to voluntariness or rather reliability and steadiness than to the question of engagement. Openness and creativity is in the centre of interest, (but often as a departure of pedagogical efforts and as an end in itself for youngsters). But it is hard to turn it into a long-lasting, collective and transformative process.

As we already mentioned, these three institutions differ with regard to the degree of institutionalisation and the subject-orientation of the participatory approaches: i.e. in open youth work the idea of voluntariness is an important and basic condition, school focuses on compulsory attendance, and religious communities set religious belonging in the centre of affiliation.

Anyhow and quite remarkable, three aspects remained quite similar throughout the three cases:

- *Dethematisation of inequalities:* At least on the background of the participatory research disadvantages and social inequalities did not age become a visible (and speakable) issue; moreover in some cases it tended to a kind of group-focused enmity, where inequalities are individualised or even culturalised.
- *Age as a visible category:* Nevertheless the factor “age” became a visible (and demanding) disadvantage in all three cases especially when linking participation to the adults’ world (Why can’t we...?). The hindrance of access and the absence of opportunities then could be scrutinised and brought into a legitimised arena.
- *Ideas of formal modes of participation and status and processes democracy:* Democracy is not acknowledged as an enabling structure but often seen as a constrained space of opportunities; as such participation is often reduced to ideas of social engagement for his/her own sake and does not entail broader aspects of transformation

In the following we want to turn away from the constriction of participation as an activity which refers to the political sphere in the narrower sense and involves influencing decision-making processes in different spheres of action of the political system. Notwithstanding we won’t ignore the political impact of participation in its broadest sense. Insofar the idea of participation is not limited to the political (representative) system and its negotiation and decision making, but it is mediated to other functional systems (such as economy, culture etc.) and policy areas.

5. Discussion, review and reflection

This chapter will reframe the empirical findings with the analytical dimensions of creation, confrontation and constitution (5.1). This will lead to the 2 core concepts of the project, namely substantial freedoms of *participation* (5.2) and *aspirations* and the capacity to aspire (5.3). Finally a methodological reflection on Research Methods will conclude this chapter, which combines the participatory research agenda and the analytical concept of participation (5.4).

If we want to summarize and cluster all of these empirical findings, it might be helpful to differentiate them roughly on a societal, institutional, interactive and subject-orientated level (although acknowledging that these levels interrelated and the empirical findings can be seen from other levels as well).

Societal level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of mini-jobs / opportunities and the exercise of agency • Wearing a headscarf and its consequences for agency • Scenery 2: “The discomfort with democracy and the vote for dictatorship”
Institutional level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The obligation to choose and the question of voluntariness • A project in the open institution (youth club): An attempt of “structuring the unstructured” • Significance of the mosque and (belonging to a) religion
Interactive level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external drive of competition as self-positing and public-a(c)tion • Defining the objective: The touristic city guide as an attempt to self-location and gaining an own perspective – for others • Scenery 1: The confrontation with local politicians – Selected ways and prepared questions
Subject-orientated level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approbation of the photographic view and creativity as a basic foundation of participation • Creativity/Participation and the risk of neglecting disadvantages and inequalities

Table 2: Clustering cross-case empirical findings

These findings can be again reframed in by means of three Core Dimensions of a broad concept of participation (see in detail next chapter):

- Creation (especially aspirations & subject-orientated level),

- Confrontation (especially ‘the political’ & the institutional and interactive level) and
- Constitution (especially social rights, inequality and heterogeneity & the societal level).

5.1 Dimensions of creation, confrontation and constitution

Insofar the empirical findings are reviewed and reframed from the perspective of three *dimensions that could be understood as the main dimensions of a broad concept of participation*.

While *creation* focuses the aesthetic/productive appropriation of reality and entails the issue of aspirations, *confrontation* focuses the interactive/intersubjective appropriation of reality and entails aspects of ‘the political’. *Constitution* as the third component focuses the corporative/societal appropriation of reality and entails social rights, inequalities and aspects of discrimination.

Aspects of the subdimension “creation”

- This dimension entails the aesthetic and/or productive appropriation of reality on the one hand and a *subjective/ educational process* on the other hand.
- *This aspect can exemplarily be seen in two empirical findings:*
 - *“Approbation of the photographic view and creativity as a basic foundation of participation” as an evident way of cultural action,*
 - *On second sight in the issue of “The discomfort with democracy and the vote for dictatorship” as there is a playful approbation of democratic structures and the attempt of transformation.*
- In this respect it is best described in the broad concept of Bildung: “Bildung points to a way of integrating knowledge and expertise with moral and aesthetic concerns. (...) It entails openness to difference and a willingness to self-correct. Bildung, in the classic sense, thus also contains a projective anticipation of the ‘good life’, of human freedom enacted with responsibility for self and others in the open-ended project of self-creatio” (Bleicher 2006, S. 365).
- In this respect this dimension reflects the level of subjects (subjectivity) but foremost analysing its social embeddedness. Insofar it is (theoretically) especially covered by the concept of aspirations (see Baillergeau/Duyvendak 2013).
- It is related to the *intrinsic dimension* or value of democracy, “since political freedom and participation are essential parts of human well-being and, as such, are listed among the basic capabilities” (Bonvin 2009)

Aspects of the subdimension “confrontation”

- This dimension entails the **interactive/intersubjective appropriation of reality** on the one hand and a **(micro) political process** on the other hand.
- *This aspect can exemplarily be seen in three empirical findings:*
 - *“The confrontation with local politicians – Selected ways and prepared questions” as an attempt to provoke and challenge local politicians in their selected ways. Anyhow this “failed attempt” again showed the imbalance in power and self-efficacy of two*

confronted stakeholders which can be seen as a main barrier of the appropriation of the political.

- *“The obligation to choose and the question of voluntariness” as well as the “significance of the mosque” as an (mainly) implicit questioning of the institutions and their (il)legitimate basis to address the youngsters and their situations.*
- *“Defining the objective: The touristic city guide as an attempt to self-location and gaining an own perspective – for others” as an interactive and as such a micro political process of approbation of the subject matter and its possible contexts.*
- This dimension entails the **transformative character of participation/participative research**. Because if participation is not related to the perpetuation or increase of the quality of life it seems to be a conventional social action rather than participation in a broader and transformative sense. It can be analysed as an interactive or as a public way of confronting perspectives and as such bringing in unmet needs. *Insofar it can be seen - in its best sense - as **the innovative character of participation**.*
- In this respect this dimension reflects **the level of institutions** (and their addressees) and encompasses a perspective on societal conditions of growth which are shaped by forms of institutionalisation and situated conflicts. Insofar it is (theoretically) especially covered by the concept of **“the political”**.
- It is related to the **instrumental dimension or value of democracy**, “insofar as individuals may represent and defend their interests more efficiently in a democratic context” (Bonvin 2009)

Aspects of the subdimension “constitution”

- This dimension entails the **corporative (societal) appropriation of reality** on the one hand and a **normative (especially concerning democratic social norms) process** on the other hand.
- *This aspect can exemplarily be seen in four empirical findings:*
 - *“The absence of mini-jobs / opportunities and the exercise of agency” as the material dimension of participation,*
 - *“Wearing a headscarf and its consequences for agency” as the symbolic dimension of participation or rather representation,*
 - *Once again “The discomfort with democracy and the vote for dictatorship” as a playful and constructive approbation of democratic structures,*
 - *“Participation and the risk of neglecting disadvantages and inequalities” as norms and needs are not given once for all but have to be actively involved into processes of participation.*
- This dimension entails a **formal (and legal) dimension of constitution** as well as **informal processes of group constitution/construction**. Insofar this concept entails the idea of constitution of social problems as well as the constitution of democracy.
- In this respect this dimension reflects **societal conditions of growth** which are shaped by forms of institutionalisation and situated conflicts and focuses on the **multidimensionality and intersectionality of social inequalities** at the same time. Besides it reflects processes of homogenisation and the handling of heterogeneity and can be analysed in the concept of **positional objectivity**.
- It is related to the **constructive dimension or value of democracy**: “since all dimensions of life in society (i.e. social norms and structures, but also individual desires, needs or

beliefs, as well as the perception of their feasibility, etc.) are not given once for all, but permanently constructed and re-constructed in the course of social interactions, democracy is certainly the best way to ensure the fairness of these social constructions insofar as it allows all members of society to actively take part in these processes. Such a conception of democracy does not boil down to the aggregative procedures of majority vote and rule, but it requires the setting up of a permanent deliberative or bargaining democracy. In the capability approach, the conception of democracy implies the possibility for all to actively participate and impact on the results of the public policy process.” (Bonvin 2009: pp 16-17)

Taking these three dimensions as an evaluative yardstick, (full) participation – in the sense of the SociEtY project and the capability approach – can only analytically referred to and practically guaranteed, if all of these three dimensions are acknowledged and addressed.

5.2 Substantial freedoms of participation

Instead of grasping “participation” first of all with regard to politics and policymaking focussing structured interest representations and basic rights and youngsters’ involvement in policy making processes¹⁶, the main emphasis here is on “participation in polity” which means participation with regard to the community the youngsters feel they belong to or which they are belonging to due to their role as services users. Aim of this research and analysis was to understand participation from the perspective of a young person– to allow for a subject-oriented perspective. At the same time the processual perspective is of special interest. In doing so basic questions of agency and how to achieve the real freedom to express one’s aspirations, expectations and desires and make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made emerge.

The relation between Participation and Social Inequalities

If we understand participation as the counterpart of social exclusion (and not social inclusion/integration) the material - as well as the symbolic - dimension can turn into this concept: Having “full participation” as a substantial freedom in mind, “the most basic being the ability to reproduce a person’s own life on a daily basis, the highest determining and realizing a future, hopefully better, state of society. Participation in the basic case means simply having access to the means of survival (food, shelter, clothing) that are socially produced. Participation in the highest case means access to the means of contributing to new inventions (experience, education, free experimentation, autonomous production) and the generalization of these (via the market and public in the course of debates about possible and desirable futures for society). (Steinert 2003: 53-54)

Hence, Participation - in its subject-orientated sense - can be defined as a special form of human acting, which (tries to) influence the situation as a whole (from the perspective of the subject) and therefore the perpetuation or increase of the quality of life is tackled and aspired. Crucial for the attribution of human action as participation is not a catalogue of

¹⁶ In former working steps of the Society project participation was analysed in its formal modes of participation (and structural barriers), the given opportunities in the district to act out their own expressions and/or voice their concerns as well as the (mis)recognition of current participatory attempts. Participation in its subject orientated was the focus of this participatory research.

forms and modes, but the exercise of influence on the entirety - which can be a political or social entirety - and therefore it is always tending to the (re)arrangement of the social (Scheu/Autrata 2013 as well Ley 2013).

5.3 Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

The relation between Participation and the capacity to aspire:

Aspirations, wants and preferences as derivatives of particular ideas about a flourishing life are not solely individual but also formed in social life, by society and through local efficaciously beliefs and ideas. The ability or opportunity to abstract more local or group-specific aspirations to more general and generic norms and beliefs is what the capacity to aspire spans. Both participation, meaning the opportunity to articulate and influence unequal circumstances and to make them visible, and the capacity to aspire, meaning the opportunity to abstract from concrete wants to general norms as a future-oriented logic and a reframing of existing and imposed regimes and social conditions, are linked with each other and point directly at political and social/public processes of change. Arguing with the Capability Approach (CA) there is a need of enhancing capabilities to exercise and put into effect of voice and capacity to aspire, especially with regard to a serious interpretation of participation, deliberative practices and democracy.

Capabilities - in this case study - are regarded as a relational concept, a concept that has to be explored 'between structure and agency', as real opportunities and the dispositions to make use of them to be able to realise one's concerns are both preconditions for capabilities. The realisation of what one reasonably values is always bound to the social context people find themselves in.

5.4 Research Methods: A methodological reflection

There was a broad interest of youngsters, youth workers and stakeholders about this research project and its vague approach to youngsters' perspective in local policies. But in fact it mainly remained unclear in relation to the role and the benefit for the participants and it often stayed unclear from the researchers' point of view (as there was no clear ending and no clear goal to reach). Starting point of the research was to elaborate interests, ideas and aspirations - as well as conflicts, discriminatory experiences and barriers. Participatory Research considers all perspectives of those involved into the research process, but is not necessarily focusing common interests.

Anyhow, this subchapter highlights three methodological aspects that came across during the research process.

Firstly, action or rather "promoting a project" is a necessary (even inevitable?) but also ambivalent criterion of participative research. It seems to be (pedagogically) reasonable to set a goal and to work towards a final aim, nevertheless it carries the curtailment of the participatory claim (it can turn from a transformative idea - in whatever form - to a more "consumeristic" idea of being engaged, being part of, having fun etc.). Furthermore while focussing the goal, the negotiation process might be shadowed and other voices could be silenced; insofar a reflection on the conditionality of "process and product" was needed.

This “product placement” was an essential “(de)motivator” in school and seemed to be a critical turning point in the photo project in the youth club.¹⁷

Secondly, setting an issue or rather “defining the problem” (the way of posing a problem, the way of looking at a problem) became a critical part within the preparation and realisation of the participatory research. How much content do we provide? What can be part of the negotiation process in the local group of researchers and participants? What will be predetermined for the “success of the project” (i.e. as we already set up a project title and broad issues for the photo workshop)? Do we (want to) find a consensus or is the elaboration of different voices enough?

- *Concerning the area:* Do we set up a spatial focus which might not be a focus of the youngsters)?
- *Concerning disadvantages:* How can we speak about poverty and disadvantages? How can we turn these into discussions about positive freedoms the youngsters deem to value? How can we ask for perspectives of a youth-friendly and justice-orientated community which goes beyond particular interests?
- *Concerning the youth:* How can we talk about the “youth”? Should we just ask for “youth dreams”, “youth spaces”, hence aspirations, desires, wishes and prospects?

Thirdly, already during the preliminary discussions with stakeholders and the participatory research, it became obvious that we are not **entrancing** an undescribed, blank and inactive **field**, but a lot of things were already existent (not new), done, already forgotten etc. In addition, some of our first ideas were reused, taken up or absorbed (which is not inherently bad, in fact it was welcome, but somehow the agency of bringing things in specific directions got lost). After all the researchers were sometimes used for legitimisation (as we did it with some of the field as well!), for diverse and sometimes contradictory claims. This demonstrates that the researcher is not only a boundary subject but as well a boundary object, which has to be taken into account as participatory research often entails the idea of equal and altruistic partners. Furthermore it did not always become clear to the young people why research was part of these processes and for what the research stands for (some youngsters asked if they will be in the newspaper soon).

Taking these three aspects “*promoting a project*”, “*defining the problem*” and “*entrancing the field*”, it was much easier to “hide behind the photo workshop” and to see the exhibition as a distinct goal, delivering something new, giving a return to the stakeholders and closing the process. Anyhow the creative bias within this project made it complicated to set up a critical view onto social circumstances.

¹⁷ Consequently we wanted to allow for short-term and long-term involvement (and their combination) as well as not setting the goal at the top of participative research.

6. Conclusions

With this multisided participatory research we reached different groups of young adults via divergent institutional settings. We converged the participatory research agenda with an analytical (theoretically driven) concept of participation. As such we especially did a research on settings, circumstances, processes and - internal as well as external - barriers of participatory attempts.

The area where the youngsters are situated was sketched in its local policies and formal modes of participation. Based on the assumption that communities and pedagogical institutions should act as enabling structures, the context in which capabilities might be realised have been scrutinised. Nonetheless the underlying socio-spatial focus of the participatory research was regarded as a starting point, but it shouldn't be seen (and it sometimes appeared) as a constriction of perspectives. Furthermore as these three institutions in focus were not directly connected to virulent policy areas or concrete programs in question, it was hard to directly link the youngsters' perspectives to an evaluation of current local welfare regimes and their underlying informational basis.

Anyhow explicit thematisations of inequalities and hence processes of displaying and developing different conceptions of justice were a complicated undertaking.

Setting an issue or rather "defining the problem" (the way of posing a problem, the way of looking at a problem) became already a critical part within the preparation and realisation of the participatory research. Especially when looking at the creative photo workshop, inequalities (in its broadest sense) disappeared and were mainly invisible.

As such photography did not work as a medium of public critique (as it was intended from the researchers at the beginning) but as an educational medium of the approbation of realities.

In this paper we tried to develop a broad concept of participation which entails three basic dimensions of creation, confrontation and constitution and as such tries to integrate a subject orientated, an institutional and a societal level. While creation focuses the aesthetic/productive appropriation of reality and entails the issue of aspirations, confrontation focuses the interactive/intersubjective appropriation of reality and entails aspects of 'the political'. Constitution as the third component focuses the corporative/societal appropriation of reality and entails social rights, inequalities and aspects of discrimination.

Taking these three dimensions as an evaluative yardstick, (full) participation – in the sense of the SocIEtY project and the capability approach – can only analytically referred to and practically guaranteed, if all of these three dimensions are acknowledged and addressed.

7. Policy relevant implications

Some case studies perceive Participatory Research as Social innovation *per se*, because they emphasize “new ways of knowledge production” or they carve out the situated voices of youngsters (assuming that these are marginalised voices in the public process). Other case studies understand social innovation as (“good” and new) political innovation (and understand participatory research as an appropriate way to research social innovation), where the participation of youngsters is increased. But what should be the place of youngsters’ voice in social innovation and participatory research while being aware of the construction of preference (building) and not exaggerating the voices as the one and only objective portrayal?

Several aspects – through the lens of the capability approach - should be emphasized:

- The Capability Approach focuses on the possibilities of individuals to realise what they reasonably value. **In this sense, participation is not a must, rather it has to be reasonable and valued from the person’s viewpoint. Participation should not be a duty, but a real option.**
- If participation is not related to the perpetuation or increase of the quality of life it seems to be a conventional social action rather than participation in a broader and transformative sense.
- Barriers and opportunities have to be at the core of an (empirical) analysis of social action and participative practise.
- Thus, the capacity to aspire concerns ‘how human beings engage their own futures’ (Appadurai, 2004: 63) and the normative frameworks from which desire and imaginations of the future take form. They are tied to the possibility “to have a more complex experience of the relation between a wide range of ends and means, [...] to explore and harvest diverse experiences of exploration and trial, because of their many opportunities to link material goods and immediate opportunities to more general and generic possibilities and options” (ibid: 61) Thereby, **institutions can become the main driving force** but it should not be bounded to their rationalities.

Assuming that participation is contingent upon trust into public institutions and actions and acknowledging that this trust is heavily related to social inequality, it becomes clear that the notion of participation as “naturally growing” empowerment becomes fragile and depends on **individual and social (conversion) factors** (i.e. motivation as a social issue) as well as the **set of opportunities** during the whole process of participation (attempts).

Hence, trust in public institutions is not something which comes before participation, in fact policy and social work practice must be trustworthy and evaluate participative practice as a value in itself and promote different (pre)forms of participation, which entails the **democratisation of social service organisations** as well.

Institutionalized arenas where young people are allowed and empowered to voice their concerns and wishes and the professionals are obliged to take account of it, should still be at the core of deliberative policies and democratic social services.

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CASE STUDY SWITZERLAND

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1. Executive Summary

(1) Introduction

This chapter introduces the specific case-study that we conducted with several groups of young adults in Lausanne, Switzerland. We present the general approach of our participatory research and the main lines of inquiry used for analysing the experience of youngsters whose trajectories differ from the ideal of linear and fluid transition to adulthood.

(2) Research questions and research design

Drawing loosely on the method of “sociological intervention” (Dubet 1987, Dubet & Martuccelli 1996, McDonald 1999, Cousin & Rui 2011), we ran a series of collective interviews with youngsters involved in different institutional contexts. In the first research sessions, youngsters expressed their views and elaborated their own questioning in relation to their inclusion in a specific program, their specific life-situation, or their experience of being “in transition” from school to work. In a second phase, the presence of interlocutors (selected by the young adults themselves) brought a more deliberative stance to the discussion and allowed youngsters to confront themselves with actors that occupy a different position in the field of transition.

Beyond the overall common question, which refers to the extent and the ways in which youngsters’ perspectives are taken into account in different policies, we try to reconstruct the repertoires of meaning that are relevant in the framing of the participants’ collective experience of being in transition. Our research questions are thus twofold:

- *What are the social relations, repertoires of meaning and logics of action that youngsters identify as relevant in the shaping of their individual and collective experience?*
- *How do youngsters perceive the various expectations from the “adult world” and negotiate these demands in the construction of their subjectivities?*

(3) Research findings

Even though they are defined as being outside of both the institutional calendar and the normative expectations of the Swiss life-course regime, the young people that participated to our research deeply integrate the promise of modern capitalist societies in the building of

their subjectivities. As a matter of fact, the group discussions demonstrated on many occasions their adherence to the demand to “become actor of their own life” and a widely shared aspiration to find “self-realization” through work. However and by contrast with other (less disadvantaged) categories of youth, research participants highlighted the complex issue of building a vocational project that makes sense for themselves, given their position within the field of transition. While confronted to negative collective stigmatization by employers, young people are subject to institutional demands aiming at reframing their aspirations into marketable biographies, in order to maximize their integration potential. There is thus a demand for subjective investment in biographies as a condition for the inscription in social institutions (Astier & Duvoux 2006 : 7). The posture and discourse adopted by the interlocutors positioned the youngsters exactly in such a way: They did not directly “enforce” the constraint to behave as autonomous individuals, nevertheless they clearly framed how young beneficiaries are supposed to redefine themselves and their life, even when confronted with stigmatization and group-based labeling. Beyond this general finding, our research reveals contrasted experiences and issues according to the institutional contexts in which participants are involved.

The young people in **Group 1** emphasized the collective stigma produced by institutional labeling, being in a SAS-class constituting the lower end of the different tracks at the OPTI (and of the Swiss lower secondary school system). In a context where employers determine the value of applicants on the basis of their own criteria, participants described their situation as not being given any chance to “prove” that they are “work-ready” and motivated. Their experience of being in the SAS is characterized by being confronted to public “tests” (Boltanski & Thévenot 1991), in which their social worth (and recognition) is assessed mainly by their school marks. Due to their relative “smallness” in this order of recognition, they refer to an alternative order of worth, that of being a “good” (motivated, diligent, hard-working) worker – and they criticize the fact that they are not given the chance to prove this.

Youngsters in **Group 2** put a specific focus on the contradictions characterizing the entry into the labour market. While hoping to succeed as quickly as possible, they highlighted in particular the difficulties of satisfying employers’ demands for motivation in a context (e.g. internship) that does not let them the time to prove their value at the workplace. Their critique towards the apprenticeship market concerned also the strong competition that it introduces between sometimes very young applicants, imposing growing constraints on them in terms of proving work-readiness and diligent behavior in a work setting. Some participants argued that the age of 15-16 is too early to choose an apprenticeship, especially when considering that they could not benefit from an adequate orientation and support within the obligatory schooling system. Youngsters underlined in particular the lacking information and coaching on existing opportunities and practical steps to follow in order to enter the labour market. By contrast with Group 1, their vocational choices already seemed to be relatively clear and their aspirations for later work mostly referred to a sense of

“conformist participation”.

By contrast with Group 1 and 2 (who were younger and whose experiences at the workplace were more limited), participants of **Group 3** more systematically insisted on the alienating dimension of the world of work, which was pictured mostly as one that utilizes humans as commodities and is insensitive to youngsters’ needs and situation in life or simply too demanding. This (sometimes vehemently expressed) resentment deeply contrasted with their high expectations regarding labour market integration and what a job should bring about, as participants insisted on the value of developing fertile social relations, of being able to bring own ideas and contribute in a way that makes sense for themselves. As a matter of fact, many of them actually conceived their enrollment in an integration measure as an opportunity to get a job that would satisfy these expectations. Their critique did not necessary address the principle of working *per se* but rather the conditions they are subject to within the actual labour market, which do not allow them to develop their own agency and obtain the recognition to which they aspire.

After critical reflection, youngsters developed the idea that the “transition system” carries within it specific issues related to questions of timing. Participants argued in particular that the actual system fails to provide enough time to choose and opportunity to experiment jobs that they (would) have reason to value. A shared consensus emerged during the discussion in conceiving timing as an important barrier to a fruitful transition into work.

(4) Conclusions

In this section, we develop some methodological reflections, synthesize the main findings of our research and contextualize them in the framework of the overall goals of the SociEtY research-project.

(5) Policy-relevant implications

The young people highlighted that they need more time to choose and insisted on the relevance of finding a job that allows them self-realization. They do not reject the principle of choosing a job and even to adapt, but deplore non-fairness due to discrimination (in all three groups). The placement logic (no youth left behind) stands in sharp contrast with the young persons’ perception. They do not want to simply “find something” that bridges their transition period, but rather attempt to find something subjectively meaningful.

2. Introduction

A core presumption of contemporary public policy is that careful thought, detailed planning and the formal participation of the target-groups are central factors for reaching the goals determined from the top. Whilst all these things are certainly important, instrumentalist, policy-design oriented approaches seldom account for the situated knowledge of those who are the objects of policy and experience the process of its implementation. The aim of this report is to analyze policies “from below” on the basis of a participatory research experience

that we conducted with several groups of young adults, and to draw on the situated knowledge of users as research data.

Rather than simply “reporting” the voices, claims and issues of the young persons and using them as the basis for ready-made policy recommendations, it is our ambition to provide an account of a collective inquiry which involved a more or less autonomous formulation of relevant research topics, several encounters and discussions with policy makers, teachers, counselors and administration staff. Far from simply providing an account of how the policies and programs from school to work are experienced by youngsters, it is important for us to describe the process that led them to reflect on how their own experience is embedded in different social relations, and is made-up by larger social contexts. This report is thus a collective product to which the young persons and their institutional interlocutors have contributed as much as we have.

The specific case study that we present in this report not only describes the experience of transition-policies in Switzerland (as it is lived by youngsters themselves) but also provides broader descriptions of the life-worlds of contemporary disadvantaged youth. We thus seek to present some glimpses of the way the transition is described as an experience involving many different aspects by young adults whose trajectories differ from the ideal of linear and fluid transition to adulthood. Beyond the overall common question, which refers to the extent and the ways in which youngsters’ perspectives are taken into account in different policies, we try to reconstruct the repertoires of meaning that are relevant in the framing of the participants’ collective experience and “struggles for subjectivity” (McDonald 1999). By *experience* we mean a “normative and cognitive process, which supposes reflexivity, a capacity for critics and a subjectivation effort” (Dubet & Martuccelli 1996:14). It is important to point to the fact that even the most individual experience remains socially constructed, not only as it takes place in social relations but also because it always draws on collective systems of meaning. This first line of inquiry aims at “reconstructing how actors are able to conceive themselves as individuals or subjects” (Cousin & Rui 2010 : 24) from the background of various and sometimes conflicting demands.

A second line of inquiry aims at initiating a collective process, in which the participants themselves “enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, in order to plan, act, monitor, evaluate” (Briefing note on Participatory methods and the CA). The chosen method, which we adapted to our own research context, finds its origin in research on (and with) social movements (Touraine 1978) and is genuinely thought of as a tool for democratic knowledge production and a self-analysis of social movements. Only in later applications, the method has been applied for groups not being part of a social movement (see e.g. Dubet 1987) (youngsters, workers, ordinary citizens). As such, a central dimension of the analysis consists in describing how young persons, as “lay researchers” define what “the issue” is, who they want to meet, and how they define “the problem” they are encountering. We conceive this as an experimental process which is open in character and content and does leave ample space for the young participants to develop their own claims.

This process furthermore resonates within some central ideas of the CA and our theoretical reflections in WP 2. To a certain extent, we will explore the conditions and modalities of deliberative inquiry that are central to Sen's approach (Bonvin and Galster 2010). In the CA, choices in allocation decisions must be "democratic, not just in a "thin" sense, having leadership succession determined by a regular electoral process, but in the "thick sense" of messy and continuous involvement of the citizen in the setting of economic priorities" (Evans 2002: 56). Furthermore, Sen's concept of "positional objectivity" highlights the epistemological significance of value judgments made from particular social positions, "while holding that certain values may become widely shared" (Anderson 2003: 239). These ideas find resonance in John Dewey's conception of democracy, who defines it as a form of a "social inquiry" where experiences are mediated through public discussion, and in which citizens engage into a collective learning process (see also Bohman 2004). Such a process can be defined as a method of "organized intelligence" in which conflicts of interest are brought "out into the open where their special claims can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests"¹⁸.

This method bears also on an enlarged conception of participation that is not limited to political institutions, but applies in every arena where collective issues can emerge in relation to people's experiences and concerns. In our view, such a deliberation enhances the probability of taking into consideration hitherto neglected or invisible opinions and allowing the people concerned to participate effectively in all normative and rule-setting processes (Beuret, Bonvin and Dahmen 2013). Our conception of a participatory research concerns not only the degree to which youngsters' voices are heard in the conversations, but also the degree to which their voice is engaged in constructing the framework within which conversations take place. It obviously moves beyond youngsters as interesting sources of data, or as objects of teachers', researchers' or vocational counselors' professional gaze, to youngsters as co-constructors of new meanings and actors of the transition system.

The third line of inquiry is more related to youth, the social organization of transitions and the structural changes that the life-course phase between "childhood" and "adulthood" is undergoing. Youth as a "moratorium" is a socially constituted phase of experimentation with roles and identities, partly exempted from the burden of specific social norms and obligations, in which young people obtain continually new social roles and in which their passage into "adulthood" is accompanied by various social norms and demands. This "moratorium" is strongly dependent on specific institutions, undergoing social change, and the transition from one status to another is subject to institutional practices and processes that regulate this phase.

The general question we try to develop concerns the subjectivation processes and regulations of individuals' 'identity work' that are at work within the field of transition. Such

¹⁸ Dewey J., 1935, *Liberalism and Social Action*, quoted in: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, URL : <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dewey-political/>

an issue is deeply informed by the different discourses dominating the organizational field of youth policies that we already highlighted in WP4. Furthermore, it seeks to explore young people's responses to the social positions that these discourses assign to them. Such responses may take various forms according to the issues at stake, from frontal opposition, such as rejecting the obligation to choose an occupation at the age of 15, to adherence to recognition orders transmitted by the adult world, such as meritocracy or hard-working ethics.

Finally, we analyze how young persons deal - collectively and individually - with sometimes contradictory demands pointed to them from the "adult" world. One important topic, emerging in different group discussions and collective interviews, was the often positively embraced demand to "become actor of their own life", to find "self-realization" through work, while at the same time being confronted with institutional judgments that question their aspirations and their plans for the future. As Dubet and Martuccelli (1996: 12) put it, instances of socialization are aiming at "producing in the same time integrated actors and autonomous subjects". Integrated actors, insofar the demand to inscribe oneself within a given social order implies – esp. in a context in which access to specific social positions is allocated by a market coordination mechanism – to abide by specific orders of recognition, and to understand oneself in a specific way; autonomous subjects, insofar liberal democratic societies expect individuals to comply with the demand of self-realization through work, and that they integrate themselves not by direct coercion, but by "free" will.

3. Research questions and research design

Drawing loosely on the method of "sociological intervention" (Dubet 1987, Dubet & Martuccelli 1996, McDonald 1999, Cousin & Rui 2011), we have run a range of collective interviews with youngsters involved in different institutional contexts. During this process, youngsters were not only able to express their views but to elaborate their own questioning in relation to their inclusion in a specific program, their specific life-situation, or their experience of being "in transition" from school to work. It is important to point to the fact that this method does not simply aim to reconstruct "individual" experience, but tries to analyze the social conditions in which the construction of subjectivity takes place. Actors' narratives are occurring in the larger sphere of social relations that shape collective experiences.

The use of "sociological intervention" implies also a redefinition of the researchers' position, which is moving from disengaged observation to assumed participation (and thus "intervention") within the research process. In addition, it usually implies three well-defined roles: a "secretary" (transcribing the sessions), an "interpreter" (charged to help the participants to constitute themselves as a group and accompany their action) and the "analyst", who both stays at distance and tries to summarize the narratives of the group and introduce a sociological perspective. While we did not fully abide by this strict role-

attribution, we found it helpful that two to three researchers participated to the sessions, who structured the discussion, pointed to specific facts and issues and reformulated and “translated” expressions of the participants in order to clarify their meaning. Our use of the “sociological intervention” aims fundamentally at analyzing the social relations that shape collective experiences in which the construction of subjectivity takes place. In this perspective, the presence of interlocutors during the second phase research session is quite crucial. This setting helps ensuring a deliberative stance but on the other side, it corresponds also to a way of enacting social and power relations, confronting views and arguments between actors that occupy different positions in the field of transition. The interlocutors represent figures with whom youngsters might confront themselves in their daily life, and their integration into the research process allows revealing the social relations in which the different actors are engaged. Speaking of *social relations* does not refer only to interactions but more fundamentally to the various IBJJ at disposition to describe “how the world is or should be” and how subjects must act in order to satisfy specific requirements and resolve the particular issues they are confronted with (naming and framing process).

The setting can be seen as an experimental collective enquiry, where participants discuss collective ends by drawing on different positional objectivities (those of the youngsters, but also those of the invitees). Participation concerns not only the degree to which youngsters’ voices are heard in the conversations about their own aspirations, but also the degree to which their voice is engaged in constructing the framework within which conversations take place.

As we described in WP2, classic forms of participation are sometimes criticized for not being able to cancel out unequal chances of youngsters to make their voice count and exercise their participation rights. This does nevertheless not mean that so called “disadvantaged” youngsters are not interested or able to develop reasoned arguments in democratic-deliberative settings. We do therefore consider our research sessions as concrete exercises of Sen’s and Dewey’s bold proposals of democracy as a concrete experience.

We approached youngsters through different institutional contexts, which served as “strategic research sites”, as these programs regroup those youngsters that did not manage to enter VET/upper secondary training. The choice of this target group is based on the observation that the transition from school to work 1) constitutes an important area of public action (and political attention) in relation to contemporary youth policies, 2) plays a central role for the allocation of social positions - and thus the reproduction of inequalities - and 3) allows an insight into the ways youngsters reconstruct their experience and their subjectivity in relation to different and sometimes contradictory institutional demands. It is important to highlight the *collective* dimension of the experience we are talking about. Collective, because the social position of the youngsters in the Swiss transition regime, the normative expectations pointed to them, the age-graded markers which delineate deviance from the normal life-course regime, as well as the structural and symbolic resources, are social facts that are impinging on all of them. Collective too, because social experience only

constitutes itself insofar the youngsters begin to discuss their situation, exchange meanings and collectively try to give meaning to the social relations in which they are embedded.

Our research questions are twofold and intimately based on the previous features. We can formulate them as follows:

- ***What are the social relations, repertoires of meaning and logics of action that youngsters identify as relevant in the shaping of their individual and collective experience?***
- ***How do youngsters perceive the various expectations from the “adult world” and negotiate these demands in the construction of their subjectivities?***

In order to answer these questions, we have elaborated a general framework (in accordance with the specificities of our fieldwork, the local agenda and the resources of the research team) that youngsters have self-appropriated (cf. Frame 1 infra).

Despite the potential of sociological intervention as a forum of democratic deliberation, the research sessions offered more a picture of the social relations that existed outside the research setting. Our analysis thus focuses on the reconstruction of those social relationships more than it provides a propositional (transformative) framework drawing on a general and multi-informed consensus.

Frame 1: Research process and design

According to the general framework of the sociological intervention (Cousin & Rui 2011), our research design is based on three research phases (preparation, confrontation, finalization) that took place for each participating group. The research process (from first contact with groups to the last meetings) covered 6 months. Contact, both with institutions and interlocutors, was established by sending a detailed flyer (see Annex 1) about the research. Meetings with stakeholders and potential young participants (mostly serving as a project presentation) provided contextual information for the youngsters to be able to take an informed decision on their participation. The research sessions (6 in total) lasted between 2 and 4 hours (for one group, this amounts to a total of 12 hours of discussion). The empirical material has been constituted through the following research sessions:

- 1) **Preparation sessions:** The first meeting was designed as a group discussion inspired by the method of “group-workshop” (Bremer 2004: 145). Basically participants were asked to reflect on their experience and to develop specific claims regarding their transition experience. We used *vignettes* and an introductory statement that was formulated in a relatively “provocative” way, in order to facilitate participants’ positioning in relation to different statements and to link them with their own experiences. On the one side, this could steer the debate into a specific direction and introduce a bias to the issues the youngsters would have debated otherwise. On the other side, we tried to find a balance between the topics we brought into the discussion and the topics introduced by the young persons themselves. As a matter of fact, young people were interested in the reason for our interest in their experience and the occasion of our meeting. We thus had to find a way to present a minimal definition of our research topic, for which “vignettes” seemed the most appropriate way. In all cases, once youngsters felt that we were really interested in their lives and their opinions, they were motivated to take part and collectively discussed different topics. At the end of the sessions, participants were asked to write down the main points on a small sheet of paper and to pin it on a larger poster, on the basis of which another discussion took form. The groups then debated and decided about the people they would like to encounter and discuss with. In this first session, we attempted to reconstruct a “common” research question and discussion, in which the group collected narratives, and tried to build a first account of their experience and reality. In some way, we followed the “midway” between structured and totally unstructured group discussion, mixing between “specified issues” (Cousin 2010) and taking a more open, deliberative stance (McDonald 1999)¹. As soon as youngsters understood that we were interested in their experiences of transitions, and became aware that the next two hours would be devoted to an open and unstructured debate, they started to respond to the “headlines” we prepared (see Annex x).
- 2) **Confrontation sessions:** The second sessions occurred a few weeks after, in presence of the people that youngsters had selected during the first session. Before the meeting, we took half an hour with the young people to prepare the discussion and bring contextual information about the invited person (professional background, the organization he/she represents, function among the organization, etc.). After a quick introduction of the research team, the professional started the discussion in presenting his/her everyday work. Young people usually asked information questions, but then mostly turned towards the issues that had been discussed in the previous sessions. They confronted the person with their ideas, sometimes refuted, sometimes agreed with their accounts of reality, sometimes they openly criticized, sometimes they used irony, sometimes they simply remained silent. The role of the researchers was not limited to organizing and managing the sessions, but we actively (though cautiously) intervened in the course of the discussion – mostly in cases in which interlocutors “avoided” to answer a question formulated by a young person, or by summarizing the different existing positions within the group. Our experience showed that this required more than simply reporting what each person said – as this would not account for the subtleties of power and interaction that were at work, and the definitions of the situation by the different actors. For instance, while some interlocutors took a comprehensible, caring, but largely paternalistic stance, others remained within their “official” role without really entering in a discursive mode. In some debates young persons heavily drew on their own experience in order to justify their position, in others they remained within a mode of careful listening and informative questions and expressed their thoughts and critique only once the interviewee had quit the room.
- 3) **Finalization session:** The final meetings took place at the beginning of June. They mainly constituted an arena of feedback and we presented and discussed the main results of this report. No new data has been collected. Nevertheless, this meeting allowed to give a further feed-back of the status of this report, its possible impact and its potential readers.

4. Research findings

The young people that participated to this inquiry are all enrolled in measures and transition programs aiming at preparing them for entering an apprenticeship and asserting themselves on the labor-market. These measures are (in a life-course language) the intermediaries between the labour-market and the young persons, and act as gatekeepers to specific social positions. Their role consists in providing job-search assistance, preparation for entrance tests of different occupations, school-based courses and/or meetings with counselors and psychologists and regular internships. In sociological terms, they represent also powerful socialization instances, rendering young people more familiar and closer to the normative expectations of the world of work (or more generally the “adult world”), through specific routines and techniques.

In order to grasp in what respect the selected groups are interesting for our research question and to understand how the experience of the youngsters is embedded in specific social relations, it is important to describe their structural position within the Swiss transition system. Albeit our research involved youngsters from different transition programs, thus constituting a heterogeneous group, they have one thing in common. Due to the fact that they did not enter a qualifying upper secondary training, they are defined as being outside of both the institutional calendar and the normative expectations of the Swiss life-course regime (Kohli 2007). This results in a de-synchronization between institutional time (an institutionally maintained, age-based system of life-course sequences) and the biographical time (their own dealing with these normative expectations as well as with other concerns). The reasons for such a “misalignment” of particular life-trajectories with the normative expectations prevailing within the Swiss transition regime are manifold: an unequal and highly selective three-tier school system, a market-based allocation system for access to upper secondary vocational education (where employers act as important gatekeepers), an educational expansion, increasing economic pressure on firms which increase the selectivity in employers’ recruitment decisions resulting in the exclusion of the less educated despite an oversupply of apprenticeships in some professions. As described in WP3 and WP4, all this happens in some kind of contradictory institutional space: On the one side, the issue of young persons with difficulties to enter employment has never had more recognition as a public problem. On the other side, the age between 16-18 (25) still remains a space in which youngsters do not dispose of any specific welfare rights and in which, for example, the provision of “bridging offers” for youngsters between 16-18 is not mandatory (cantons are not obliged to provide them legally). This refers to the specific way the “youth moratorium” is institutionalized in Switzerland, and – as the young persons highlighted – to the issue of “time” at disposition for finding one’s own way into work. On a structural level, bridging offers have at least three functions (Bertschy, Böni and Meyer 2007): they are a

systemic “buffer”, thus organizing the waiting queues for youngsters who, due to shortage of apprenticeships in specific professions, did not find an apprenticeship after obligatory schooling; they have a function of orientation (deciding for a profession, etc.); and last but not least a “compensatory function” for those youngsters who do not (yet) dispose of the necessary competences for accessing the labour-market.

If all the individuals concerned by this study are more or less engaged in finding a secondary training/education, it is important to underline the heterogeneity among youngsters, as very different reasons can lead to not entering into VET after the end of obligatory schooling. While some used the programs as a possibility to elongate the youth moratorium in order to have more time for finding a satisfying profession, others were struggling with stigmatizing ascriptions, or with the demand to conceive their integration project as an individualized self-project. Some experienced their being at the bridging offer as a biographical rupture, as a temporal de-synchronization, and thus as a crisis situation, and were trying to reflexively make sense of their situation, while for others the bridging offer was simply “one more step” to a professional career that was not questioned itself.

As described in WP4, it is common for a number of young persons to follow so-called “bridging courses” after obligatory schooling. The incidence of bridging courses is clearly socially skewed. As access to apprenticeship is regulated by employers as gatekeepers, young people from so called “lower” school tiers, young people with “negative” market signals (too old, too young, foreigner, etc.) are over-represented in these measures. On the other hand, better-off pupils “use” bridging offers in order to have more time for choosing a profession or to enhance one’s likelihood to find a “better” apprenticeship a year later.

As the groups (cf. Frame 2 infra) established their own research agenda (the collective interviews were non-directive when it came to deciding on the concrete topics to be investigated and discussed with the interlocutors), we have been confronted during the drafting of this report with the difficulty to fit into the comparative research framework. Nevertheless, the last, concluding section tries to resume our findings within a larger, more encompassing reflection on the collective research topics.

We are now going to describe briefly, for each group, *what topics emerged during the discussion*, what kind of *interlocutors have been invited*, and what course the “*confrontation session*” took. We then proceed to a more general description of preliminary results.

Frame 2: A sociological intervention involving different groups of young adults

Two of the groups (Group 1 and 2) with whom we worked are enrolled in the *Organisme pour le perfectionnement scolaire, la transition et l'insertion professionnelle* (OPTI), a cantonal, school-like bridging offer, which provides the largest share of bridging course places in the canton of Vaud, and where most pupils are relatively young (it is accessible only for those between 15 and 18). The OPTI operates an internal differentiation of pupils, in which those that already have a clear-cut and realizable professional project are differentiated according to sectors (e.g. technical occupations, trade professions), and where the “weakest” students, along with people recently arrived in Switzerland (e.g. asylum seeker status) are placed in special classes dedicated to SAS (“school-based support and provision”). Group 1 is composed of 9 youngsters (6 male, 3 female) attending a SAS class that OPTI teachers consider as the most disadvantaged and difficult to manage among their public (“*les plus cabossés*”, as a member of the direction put it). Group 2 is composed of 10 youngsters (all male) of a class in the sector of Technology and Industry.

The last group we worked with (Group 3) is comprised of 10 youngsters (4 female, 6 male) following a transition measure (MIS) called *Scenicprod*, which is part of the larger (cantonal) FORJAD programme. This measure is (as the other 18 MIS that are included in the programme) sub-contracted to a third-sector organization that is responsible for the delivery of service. *Scenicprod* is able to support 25 youngsters (18-25) on social assistance during a 6-month period, with a certain turn-over between those who quit (or end up with) the measure and those who are entering. It is managed under the responsibility of a foundation called *Démarche*, which defines its general approach in terms of “*putting art at the service of integration*”. It offers various workshops (multimedia, music, graphism, design, body expression, creation of costumes, etc.) dispatched in different stages that lead to a final show (musical comedy) accessible to the public. As a consequence, the participants within this group were not only older than those of the OPTI, but many of them had already had a work experience, while some had followed other MIS or bridging courses in the previous years.

Overview on research participants, institutional contexts and interlocutors

	Institutional context	Participants	Interlocutors
Group 1	OPTI (SAS class)	9 youngsters	Teacher of a final year class
Group 2	OPTI (Industry and Technology class)	10 youngsters	Representative of the chamber of Mechanics and Industry (responsible for an apprenticeship training program)
Group 3	Scenicprod	10 youngsters	Apprenticeship-officer and owner of a SME which trains apprentices Policy officer of the cantonal office for social assistance

Group 1: “we are here by default, in some way”

The first group was in majority made up from young persons with a migration background, who entered the measure directly after obligatory schooling. Most of them describe their enrolment into SAS-classes in the wake of uncomfortable experiences at school and with vocational counselors, and sometimes after several unsuccessful job applications. Due to their temporal proximity to school, this constituted, seconded by their job search experience, one of the main topics of the discussion. In comparison to the other groups, youngsters from Group 1 abundantly referred to their own experience and had a remarkably high capacity of analysis. One should mention also that all of them do not experience being without an apprenticeship as dramatic and during the discussion they switched between different positions quite easily. Nevertheless, one main dimension of the discussion concerned the issue of collective stigmatization that is attached to their participation in the SAS-classes at the OPTI:

Y1: Yes there may be enough apprenticeship places, but for us they tell us that we are SAS, if somebody asks us which sector we are in, and we tell SAS they say they will call back, but they never do...

Y2: There are persons, when they were younger, they didn't come along well with their teachers, or they had issues with one particular teacher, and they left school, and because employers are becoming more and more demanding, they will never give them a chance.

Researcher: So the fact to be in a SAS-class, is that considered as negative?

Y2: Yes particularly when we call employers, we feel it.

Researcher: But you are not obliged to tell, are you?

Y3: Yes, we are not going to hide ourselves, I have never been asked for it, but also in general people say those at SAS are the weakest, a bit the least “able to work” (aptés au travail)

Y1: my opinion is that employers think that we don't work well...

Y2: No, it depends. There are those employers that only look at school results, but also those that look if we are motivated for work and if we are good at work...

In this excerpt taken from the first 5 minutes of the transcript, young people discuss their experiences of being confronted to rejection when looking for internships and jobs, but also the collective stigma of being in a SAS-class, constituting the lower end of the different tracks at the OPTI (and of the Swiss lower secondary school system). One young person even refers to the official notion of “work readiness”, which shows that he is aware of the official classification devices of institutions. The issue of “proving one’s work readiness” as a central evaluative device and test for entering the world of work was also discussed later on. Due to the collective stigma, and the fact that some employers only look at school grades, young persons are describing their situation as not being given any chance to “prove” that they are “work-ready” and motivated, the two central categories that are taken up in the later discussion. Their experience of being in the SAS is characterized by being confronted to public “tests” (Boltanski & Thévenot 1991), in which their social worth (and recognition) is assessed mainly by their school marks. Due to their relative “smallness” in this order of recognition, they refer to an alternative order of worth, that of being a “good” (motivated,

diligent, hard-working) worker – and they criticize the fact that they are not given the chance to prove this. The institutional classification brought on them was perceived as at odds with their real competences: *“If you see some of the other clowns, they are sometimes much more stupid than we are, it really doesn’t mean anything”*. In our interpretation, these objections reflect some kind of identity work, in which young people are questioning characteristics ascribed to them, and in which they struggle to find a self-description that is at the same time satisfying for themselves and for the institutions in which they are transiting. The last quote above – *“there are those employers that only look at school results, but also those that look if we are motivated for work and if we are good at work...”* – proposes an assessment of the situation, which provides both a possibility to be recognized as a worthy person in the eyes of the employers (*“we have no good school grades, but we may be recognized as good workers”*) and a “roadmap”, a rationale for finding an apprenticeship, as it is also purported by the institution itself.

The process that took place in this first session can be interpreted as a form of collective, symbolic boundary work. Boundary work refers to “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and eventime and space” (Lamont and Molnar 2002: 168). There are two important demarcations that are produced by the group as a collective: firstly, those being “motivated” at work, hard workers versus those that gain access through their good school results, but who have not proven their “value” within real work settings; secondly, a demarcation towards their own “past selves” (their “school selves”, where they were not motivated yet, not yet aware of the seriousness of the situation). These distinctions serve as boundary objects, i.e. as “tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality” (ibid.). This is indeed a collective process of meaning making in which “groups compete in the production (...) of alternative systems and principles of classifications” (ibid.) Furthermore, it serves as a tool for constituting an own sense of group membership and identity: “Symbolic boundaries also separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership” (Epstein 1992: 232).

Youngsters’ explanations for being enrolled in the OPTI-SAS refer to conflicts with teachers and the school they had to deal with when they were younger. This interpretative pattern, as the later discussion shows, is of crucial importance: many young persons insisted, often through invoking their own experience, that their “being at the SAS” was due to conflicts with teachers and the school, sometimes even recalling that they had been treated unfairly and that teachers were “racists”. Being at the SAS is presented as a kind of “accident”. The given explanation sounds like an excuse, which nevertheless does not suspend their own self-perceived and self attributed responsibility for having failed. Many youngsters describe that they were not aware of the implications that failing at school had, but that now, being in the OPTI, they are distancing from their past “selves” and are ready and willing to search for an apprenticeship. Thereby, they mark a strict dividing line between *the school* and *the*

OPTI, in which they are willing to confront a harsh reality and submit to the imperative of work.

Y2 It's true that due to the fact that we already are here for some months, we are ready, because that has been a game changer, we are at the OPTI, we need to search, but during the last year in school ... I think that here they are giving us the right conditions who make that we... that we want to search...

The group discussion also allowed analyzing how the persons “positioned” themselves towards the group. At one point in the discussion, many people agreed on the fact that “it’s the school’s fault”. One young person disagreed strongly and displayed the following opinion, to which many youngsters agreed afterwards:

“I don’t really think like them, in fact I have a different opinion on that: first, it’s a work on one’s own to search an apprenticeship, the OPTI is there for help, but it’s our task to search. Like in my class last year (during obligatory schooling) I was the only one who had not written any job application. Not one. And I am not going to tell you that it is not my fault or that it is because in school, we had too much maths and I didn’t have the time to. It is my fault, it’s me... one has to decide, if I really would have wanted an apprenticeship, I would have found one. If now, I leave the OPTI without having found an apprenticeship, yes, that’s a real problem, I really have to go for it now, I think, they help me at the OPTI, but it has to come from oneself.”

What we observed in the group discussions was also a particular, socially structured experience of the youth moratorium¹⁹, and a specific experience of “time”. Rather than being a continuation of the obligatory school, with short temporal horizons, an orientation towards the present, and a life-world of peers, this group of youngsters with specific experiences of disadvantage perceived the “institutionalized youth moratorium” as a kind of “last chance”, as a moment where they would have to struggle and mobilize themselves, and project themselves into a future profession. Transitions can be conceived as a temporal articulation between the biographical and the structural (Dubar 1994), and in the case of these youngsters, this temporal articulation was far from self-evident. Subjectively, this seemed to result in a feeling of biographical crisis, in which the future is uncertain due to the fact that collective orientation patterns of the normal life-course are at risk of losing their validity, and in which the risk and responsibility for one’s own trajectory is referred to the individual. What is asked from these youngsters “involves the presence of an extended temporal horizon, a strong capacity for self-control, a conduction of life in which programming time is crucial – traits which, taken together, identify the modern conception of individuality” (Leccardi 2005). In order to become actors of their lives, they have to submit themselves to specific regimes of recognition, and their discussions bear witness of being overwhelmed by the events. The terms of recognition, valid in the world of work, nevertheless, are perceived as immutable and uncontestable frameworks, and young

¹⁹ We use the term youth moratorium to designate youth as a specific phase of the life-course. Firstly, this refers to the fact that youth is, in a minimal definition, a “pattern of socially defined, age-graded events and roles” (Elder, 1999: 302). Secondly, it also draws the attention on the embeddedness of youth phases within specific institutions of the welfare state, as for instance, citizenship and welfare rights are distributed along age-lines (see e.g. Lima 2004). Third but not less important, it involves an intergenerational relationship (what specific problem descriptions, demands, and policy constructions are pointed towards young people).

people seem to put a lot of efforts to being recognized within these frameworks. Despite the mostly individualized interpretations of their experience, some pointers towards “collective” structural factors were issued. Particularly the reference to markers of ethnicity and race (*“Why are there only foreigners, here at the OPTI?”*) led us to consider that their struggles are also to be interpreted in the larger context of disappointed social mobility expectations of second-generation migrants.

Group 2: “it’s just a matter of time”

The second group was a purely male group of 16-17 year olds who participated in a sector-specific measure preparing for jobs in the mechanics sector. Accordingly, the discussion revolved much more around their experience at internships, as well as their experience of searching for an apprenticeship. Young people deplored that firms were asking for “work-ready” youngsters who are motivated and precise, while not letting them the time to prove their value at the workplace. One of the main interrogations that emerged during the first session referred precisely to the characteristics of the apprenticeship market, which introduces a strong competition between sometimes very young applicants and imposes growing constraints on youngsters in terms of proving motivation, work-readiness and diligent behavior in a work setting. Nevertheless, their aspirations for later work mostly referred to a sense of “conformist participation”. While criticizing some practices they experienced during their few work experiences, their professional choices already seemed to be relatively clear, and they were not – by contrast with the first group, subject of critical scrutiny and discussion. Entering the world of work comes with specific constraints – which are annoying, but the price to pay for receiving the monetary and symbolic benefits coming from work. As a member of the research team asked what feature would have to be emphasized to account for the difficulties of the young people in relation to those topics, the participants called for a better understanding of what it really means to be looking for a job nowadays and of the discouraging effects of seeing application letters being constantly refused (some of them have received more than 25 negative answers). In line with this perspective, they refuted quite vehemently interpretations emphasizing individual lacking motivation to explain their situation and insisted much more on the prevailing attitudes of employers, as well as on the demand side of the apprenticeship-market that does not necessarily match with youngsters’ interests in vocational training:

Y2: we definitely want to find an apprenticeship, it’s not true that youngsters lack motivation! The problem is actually that they don’t want us.

I: okay but for what reason do they not want you?

Y3: either they have already enough apprentices, or we do not correspond to what they are looking for.

Y4: the places that are available are not interesting for many youngsters that are looking for something else than what is available.

Furthermore participants criticized that the age of 15-16 is too early to choose an apprenticeship, *“even for those that already know what they want to do” – “at the age of*

16, *we cannot know what we want to do during our whole life*". Interestingly, this issue was not reduced to a question of individual maturity but also addressed in relation to the concrete means that youngsters have at their disposal. The young adults underlined the fact that they could not benefit from an adequate orientation and support within the obligatory schooling system, pointing out in particular lacking information and coaching on existing opportunities and practical steps to follow in order to enter the labour market. As an illustration, one participant described vocational counselors as *"unhelpful"* bureaucrats, whose support basically consists in running psychological tests and assigning the young people a vocational profile: *"the man said to me: okay, you have a rather manual profile, you should orient yourself in this domain. But nothing more, that was it."* Another youngster further elaborated this idea saying that *"actually, the vocational counselors help us more to enter a transition measure than to find an apprenticeship"*. Beyond such critiques, the underlying claim is that finding a place cannot be conceived as a strictly individual responsibility, not only because it requires a lot of work (e.g. in order to identify the vacant positions, prepare the application and oral presentation in front of employers), but also a practical knowledge that many young people cannot develop simply by themselves or with the unique support of their family. In this perspective, participants call for a larger understanding of their situation that underlines the crucial role (and responsibility) of the other actors of the Swiss transition regime.

To further elaborate this idea, participants questioned the selection criteria of firms, considering that they are far from transparent, and sometimes unfair. The collective view among this group is that employers are looking for apprentices that are *"ready trained and ready to use"*, which appeared as both arbitrary and unsustainable, and in the same time a generator of stigma and discouragement among already disadvantaged youth. Youngsters described the requirement of having several internship experiences as an especially contradictory feature. As they insisted, it is on the one side important to demonstrate one's own motivation in front of an employer but on the other side, an internship might be irrelevant or even penalizing if the firm is not a first level or a leading one in the field. As one participant put it, *"I was actually not asked if I had experience in internship but where! So I think that they don't care about your internship if it has not been done in firms with good reputation"*.

What was striking was their high endorsement of transition measures as institutionalized preparation phases before entering the world of work. In some way, and differently from the first group, they considered them as a non-fractured continuity with obligatory schooling. Also in terms of modes of socialization, their experience of the transition measure reminded strongly that of a group of pupils. While labour market integration represents the priority of the young adults within this group, their enrollment in the OPTI is mainly understood as a waiting phase during which they are able to capitalize more experience and maturity, in order to be better equipped when it comes to convince an employer. From this background, they put a strong emphasis on the practical support provided by the OPTI, at the expenses

of what they sometimes consider as *“too academic”*. As a young person recalled, *“I prefer working than coming here for classes, even though I have to wake up much earlier and finish my day later”*. The youngsters also discussed the *“strange fact”* that notwithstanding there are many apprenticeship places in the mechanics sector, a thing like a *“transition measure”* exists: *“actually it’s not true that there are enough places because otherwise such organisations like the OPTI would not even exist! If the OPTI exists, it’s because we did not find a place, that’s it”*. Based on this discussion they chose to encounter the *“boss”* of a mechanics firm, or an employers’ representative. We managed to invite the representative in charge of VET within the employer organization of the mechanics sector in the canton of Vaud.

“Being curious and motivated, that is what bosses want”

The meeting between this person and the youngsters proved to be a rather strange experience. On the one side, the interviewee clearly took the position of firms, described the structural challenges companies in Switzerland have to face, and also displayed all the usual features of a person from the economic sphere (suit, tie, an expensive clock and a big car, a fact that the youngsters pointed out to us). As a representative of the institution organizing the aptitude tests for accessing the apprenticeships and running its own training center, he started by discussing the role of the mechanics industry in Switzerland and the pressures resulting from global competition. In fact, to youngsters denouncing the high selectivity and harsh competition that are prevailing for accessing apprenticeship positions, the invited person opposed local companies’ own difficulties and the challenges they are confronted with in order to remain competitive in a globalized market economy. From this point of view, the hiring and training of young apprentices was described as a financial risk, as their work efficiency is limited in the beginning of their training. Against this background, he defined the mission of the training center as follows: *“our role consists in taking in charge the bad years, when youngsters are not ready yet to be productive. Once they are trained and ready, they end their apprenticeship within companies.”* The social relation reconstructed in this setting was that of being member of a profession as a (economic) community of destiny, in which the (future) worker contributes its own share and gets something in return. This interlocutor made clear that *“the youngsters who are curious and motivated, who are really interested in the profession, who do not come in the morning with a face as if they are going to the butchery, that’s what the bosses are interested in”*. He further underlined that the personal attitude at the workplace in terms of motivation, self-involvement, curiosity and interest for the various activities that take place within the companies, was more relevant in the selection process than the age of the applicants, their educational achievement or the scores they obtained at specific ability tests: *“young applicants staying in the corner or waiting for others to pick them up are not perceived positively, since it might indicate that they are dreamers or not motivated persons”*. Nevertheless, the types of behaviour that employers are expecting from young applicants should, according to this interlocutor, not be confused with role taking activities. As he put

it, attitudes at the workplace rather *“should be in line with the nature of the young person, as one cannot play the comedy every day during 4 years”*. The idea that the choice of the profession is first and foremost an issue of individual dispositions and wishes was put forward many times by this interlocutor – an idea against which some of the youngsters resisted, being aware that work also implies discipline, submissiveness, and that “choice” is a euphemism when you do not have many options to choose from.

Group 3: “Fitting in the system? Well, it’s not that we have other options, do we?”

In comparison with the young participants of the OPTI, youngsters among this group are slightly older and their trajectories include experiences of drop-out from school-based or dual vocational training due to “external” problems or conflicts with employers. Such experiences have been reported under the vocabulary of failure or discomfort vis-à-vis the labour market, sometimes even in terms of *mobbing* or *burn out*. While some of the participants are experiencing a process of re-orientation in terms of vocational pathways, others seem to be still struggling with finding a meaningful re-interpretation of their past experiences, often related to human problems at the workplace.

Contesting the alienating dimension of the world of work

During the first research session, youngsters developed many narratives in relation to their past (and often disappointing) experiences of the world of work. These were often associated with sensations of uselessness and loss of meaning, alternatively with a feeling of being instrumentalized by employers, features that participants reported in the same time as explaining factors of their enrolment into state-supported transition measures. In this background, they formulated a whole range of grievances against the world of work, underlying amongst others that it requires *“to stay always at the top”* and deploring that its main interest is reduced *“to allow people to earn some money”*. This world was pictured mostly as one that utilizes humans as commodities (*“but we are not machines!”*), that is insensitive to youngsters’ needs and situation in life (*“we are asked to put our private life aside but sometimes it’s just impossible!”*) or simply too demanding (*“we have to involve ourselves at 150%”*). As the previous critiques illustrate, youngsters point out a particular “conventions system”, where the worth of human beings is assessed on the basis of specific criteria that refer to the market and industrial orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot 1991). From this background, the reconstruction process of the collective experience underlined the degrading and/or alienating effect of these particular “orders of recognition” on participants’ biographies, neglecting many other aspects that they have reason to value.

The critiques developed by the young persons did not question the prevailing rules only in reference to past (and negatively perceived) experiences; they also highlighted their inadequacy in relation to own aspirations for self-realization and conceptions of the “good life”.

Y4: (...) *I would like to make an interesting work, even if the wage is not very high.*

Y7: right, working in a place where you're not feeling well is a no-way because you lose your motivation.

(...)

Y1: self-realization is really important to me. Work must be meaningful, it must touch something inside myself.

Y5: yeah exactly, the same for me!

Y7: definitely! Also because when it comes to do something 8 hours a day, I want to feel a minimal interest for what I'm doing!

Y6: life does not consist in losing your time 8 hours a day five days a week!

Y8: that's exactly why I quit my previous apprenticeship! I had interest for it but it was not a passion.

As illustrated in this excerpt, members of this group strongly appropriate the promise of self-realization through work and, as a consequence, develop relatively high expectations when it comes to think about labour-market integration - many of them actually appropriate the transition measures supported by the State as an opportunity to get a job that would satisfy these expectations. In other terms, participants do not contest the world of work *per se* but rather the conditions they are subject to within it, which do not allow them to develop their own agency and obtain the recognition to which they aspire. In fact, finding a position where the content of work and the social relations within it match with individuals' interests and make them able to participate and bring their own creativity and ideas, is highly valued by the participants of this group. These expectations are however challenged both by their past experiences at the workplace and by the (last) negative answers they received from potential employers regarding new job opportunities, which was interpreted by some young persons as a market signal requiring to re-assess the appropriateness and realizable character of their project.

The aspirations they formulate are intimately linked with a widespread and quite dominant conception of the "good life", which consists in a working life that makes sense for the individual, allowing autonomy of thinking and responsibility, and to which is attached a specific value and recognition. In this general framework, pleasure, interest and participation (as opposed to repetitive work-tasks) are depicted as central components of vocational activity, and youngsters precisely draw on these features (that were missing to a large extent in their past experiences) to elaborate a critique of the existing order.

Overcoming the gap between distinct (but related) worlds: the issue of timing

After critical reflection, youngsters developed the idea that the "transition system" carries out specific issues related to questions of timing. Participants argued in particular that the actual system fails to provide enough time to choose and opportunity to experiment jobs that they (would) have reason to value. Indeed, a shared consensus emerged during the collective discussion in conceiving timing as an important barrier to a fruitful transition into work:

“At 16, what you want is watching movies or having fun with friends. I didn’t really know what to do so I chose a training a little bit by default, because I was not fully convinced. We have then to make the private and the vocational thing match together but it’s hard when you’re young! Employers ask a lot, they put pressure on you and for me that was too much, so I dropped-out”.

As this quote underlines, the institutional framing of the life-course raises specific issues in individual trajectories that youngsters attribute to what they call an “obligation to choose”. While some of them perceived this constraint as disconnected from their own reality and priorities, some others presented it as a factor of inequality among the youth, especially when considering that it applies particularly to those with the lower educational achievements after the end of the obligatory school. While the young adults of the higher, academic school tiers are free to continue their training, can postpone the decision of the “concrete” vocational choice to a later stage in life, and live within a prolonged youth moratorium, those of the lower tiers are compelled to make choices that are experienced as very sensitive. As expressed by a young person, this can lead to choose a training “by default” and further result in a feeling to lose control over one’s trajectory. In the case of drop-out from apprenticeship, the processing of youngsters into various integration measures and the enrolment into a “transition career” certainly strengthen this feeling. The views developed by the young adults stressed out the negative impact of the rigid timing that they are subject to, which barely takes into account external factors (e.g. family relations) and one’s conception regarding own trajectory and aspirations in life. During the discussions, youngsters underlined several times the fact that they suddenly found themselves “*exposed to demands of others*”, in a situation where they are expected to “*demonstrate their motivation and interest*”, without however benefiting from sufficient time and resources to do it. Such accounts point to more general issues related to the quick transformation of young persons’ normative environment (i.e. from school to work). During the research session, one young person used the metaphor of the boxer to depict this change:

Y2: when we were at school, I mean... we could do whatever we wanted! The worst sanction was maybe to be obliged to change from one school to another. We did not fear the head of school, maybe we had basic penalties and stuff like that... but when I entered the vocational school, only a small snag could lead to be kicked-out. ... I think that we are not prepared enough because we have to box according to these new rules”

Y7: yeah that’s true, school is a quite peaceful environment, we do not need to protect ourselves so much. But then we enter a space where we really have to box, without however having received the boxing gloves!

While illustrating participants’ collective thinking to identify the social relations within which their experience is embedded, this excerpt further highlights the shift in the codes that are prevailing within two distinct worlds that are consubstantial in youngsters’ situated knowledge about transition. In this perspective, the metaphor of the boxer is utilized to describe the changes from a relatively “free” world, where difference is somehow tolerated, to another one, where behavioral deviation can quickly lead to individual

exclusion. It is especially noteworthy that the characterization of the changes they have experimented is much more related to a conception of “what is succeeding to youth engaged in transition” than “what is resulting from their own agency”. While carrying both their own normativity, these two worlds are put into perspective and reconnected in a sequential progression once youngsters reconstruct their social experience of transition, which precisely highlights the gap that they have to overcome in order to stick to the expected (normal) life-course. From this background, young people put a particular emphasis on the larger issues that overcoming this gap might represent for the least well-off, considering the negative market signal that is associated to their lower educational achievement: *“when you come from VSO, you’re at the bottom, and you keep staying at the bottom for everything because you have less solutions. What other option do you have beyond integration measures?”* Once youngsters realized that the discussions had focused on issues and *“dysfunctional aspects”* of the transition system, some of them emphasized the urgent need for solutions and constructive propositions. They thus appropriated the research setting, not only to debate as individuals but also to collectively test arguments to justify their views and value the relevance of specific claims against the prevailing norms of the world of work. In this respect, one particular topic has stimulated a very vivid debate:

Researcher: who would disagree with recognizing that entering the system would be the point?

Y1: dunno, can we change it? Not sure we can... I mean, we need money to make a change, we first need to understand and get a minimal recognition within the system before being in the position to criticize it!

Y2: yeah but the unemployment rate is barely amounting to 3%...

Y3: Enter the system? Well, it’s not that we have another option, do we? Maybe we don’t come along with the system but there is no alternative!

Y4: I would rather say that we are asked to fit the expectations of others.

Y1: but we have a voice to contest these problems!

Y5: personally I agree with adapting to the system but not at all costs! One should be able to say stop before feeling really too bad. Actually I am neither pro-system nor anti-system, I am just looking for a balance between being inside and do my stuff, but still with some...

Y2: ...some money-money?

Y5: no just some pleasure in living here and for what I do. I have no interest in working 12 hours a day like a dog, I can’t see myself within that model.

This interaction highlights a reflexive discussion on the requirements of living in a functionally differentiated society, which demands adopting specific roles, and on the alternative (possible) modes of existence within it. It furthermore illustrates youngsters’ ability to formulate critiques and negotiate their involvement between integration into a given social order and the transformation of that social order. In this perspective, such an excerpt highlights the essential modalities under which young people’s subjectivities are constructed. As the synthesis formulated in the last 3 comments illustrates, this process requires a continuous identity work to accommodate external constraints within individual’s interiority, which eventually leads to a discursive compromise between compliance to market requirements and individual agency.

Frame 3: The process of recruiting interlocutors and its outcomes

At the end of the first session and despite initial skepticism (“*will it change anything? We want to meet somebody influential!*”), the young people agreed to meet up again with institutional interlocutors, because “*that might allow others to avoid some of the things we have experienced*”. The choice of these interlocutors, left to the youngsters themselves, was made on the basis of the topics discussed. As many reported issues of conflicts with employers and at the workplace, young people were interested in meeting a representative from the world of work or a main actor of the “transition system”. On the basis of these indications, we found two persons to meet the youngsters during a two-hour session each. The first meeting was scheduled with a **representative from the municipal social assistance office**, a policy-officer responsible for the development of new projects related to youth; the other person was an **apprenticeship commissioner** for the field of artistic professions. Apprenticeship commissioners have a pivotal role in the corporatist governance of the Swiss apprenticeship system. Appointed and financed by the organizations of the world of work, they control the compliance to the legal norms and training regulations and intervene in cases in which young apprentices and employers are in conflict. Furthermore, the person we recruited is an employer himself and was enrolled in creating new apprenticeship-ordinances, i.e. those regulations that define what competences and curricula the awarding of a specific diploma requires.

During the confrontation sessions, both invitees presented their views and role in front of youngsters, in relation to the various issues developed during the previous sessions. While the content of the discussions opened up new understandings of youngsters’ experiences, the perspectives carried on by the invited persons conflicted in many respects with the views and claims developed by the young participants regarding the transition system and its main actors. As a matter of fact, several youngsters reported after the end of the meetings that their interlocutor “*failed to address the real problems*” and were actually not willing to consider their claims seriously. Indeed, the framing of the discussion topics by the invitees not only challenged the key arguments highlighted by the young persons but also partly annihilated their critical dimension, the interlocutors taking advantage of their position to impose a pragmatic agenda based on “the reality as it is” over a more “political” one (suspected to be either too disconnected from the most urgent imperatives or implying changes that are mostly beyond their control).

Adjusting behaviors to pre-existing social orders

The definition of interlocutors’ role was pictured mainly through the official missions and goals they are pursuing. Within this general framework, the invitees interpreted youngsters’ particular situation and difficulties mostly as a symptom of their inability to adequately adjust or coordinate their action with the social environments in which they are expected to bring their contribution in a close future. This posture was often sustained by statements highlighting the positive aspects of the VET system (against young participants’ claims), especially once replaced at a general level or in international perspective, or the large scope of job opportunities within the actual labour market, one interlocutor insisting for example on the fact that “*Switzerland, and especially the Lemanic area, are very dynamic places that offer a lot of opportunities*” (Head officer).

While providing a reassuring message regarding young participants’ situation, these features constituted discursively also relevant arguments for emphasizing their own responsibility and questioning their attitudes in relation to specific “social decorums”, i.e. the whole rules

that one should observe in order to maintain his status within a particular social context. In line with this perspective, one of main efforts of the interlocutors consisted in delineating the “appropriate actions” (Thévenot 2006) that youngsters should follow in order to maximize their chance of integration and overcoming the problems they have encountered so far. These requirements were sometimes described in very basic (and even caricatural) terms, as when the social assistance officer defined employers as “*pragmatic guys*”, whose expectations can easily be satisfied by the young persons in simply “*being on time and doing what they are asked to*”. As a matter of fact, both interlocutors dedicated much effort to characterize the principles governing the world of work, as opposed to those prevailing in other spheres of life. The apprenticeship commissioner recalled for example that employers should not be considered as “*philanthropists*”, but rather as a category of people that is very sensitive to attitudinal competences: “*Being adequate is something crucial, it means that you’re in the target! Employers are not philanthropists, if they decide to hire a particular person, it’s not because of her eyes but for what she’s going to produce, it’s because they think that their company will live through the action she performs*”. As illustrated in the previous quote, the appropriateness of youngsters’ behavior at the workplace supposes the ability to conceive one’s own action into a larger “form of life” that requires loyalty to the company to get returns on investment, which is a crucial condition for labour-market integration. Beyond the particular examples used by the interlocutors, the underlying message was that if all young adults would be able to adapt their attitudes to the specific “social decorums” in which they are involved, their problem would be resolved automatically.

Debating on the injunction to take one’s life into one’s own hands

While insisting on work-readiness and compliance with labour-market norms as a programmatic for finding an apprenticeship, the invitees emphasized in the same time the importance of individual autonomy. The head officer insisted that social assistance was a mean to reach autonomy, “*to give everybody a chance to be able to choose one’s job, what one wants to do in life, not to depend on the collectivity*”. Social assistance was described as an “enabling” social institution that leads persons to (financial) autonomy and to the creation of those citizens liberal democratic-capitalist societies are in need of. He emphasized that youngsters are a specific focus of interest of the social assistance scheme, as “*the less you have diplomas, the more vulnerable you are*”²⁰. One of the youngsters confronted the policy officer with the question “*In fact your goal for professional integration, is to do job placement, without necessarily taking into account if the job or the workplace pleases the beneficiaries?*” The policy officer refutes the notion of “job-placement” which he puts in the economic sphere: “*we don’t do job placement, we don’t do*

²⁰ From earlier interviews and analyses, we know that the social assistance in the canton of Vaud is following a social investment strategy, trying to give the “right” incentives for youngsters to train in order to reduce welfare expenditure in later life-course.

that, we even don't know what that means. 'Elaborate a professional project', yes, that is what we do, even if it is quite complicated!" Through his refutation of the term "job placement", he denies at the same time any (direct) outer interference with the preferences of the individual, who is meant to perform the task of "finding one's place" in society by himself. He describes social assistance as a maieutic device for a will that resides within the individual, who is "independently capable of action and driven by her internal motivations" (Ehrenberg 1999: 311). In the course of the discussion, the interlocutors presented various stories that were supposed to provide some clues for youngsters to participate and to be recognized by socially relevant institutions.

Head officer: as an example, I just hired a ski monitor in our service. You might ask why? Because she has a different experience that says something of her trajectory! And I think that highlighting your competencies is an everyday work to fight discriminations, we live in a highly competitive society, so you have to fight.

Y4: yeah it's not good to conceive the past in negative terms. The point is that we have to scrutinize it in order to find what positive aspects we can emphasize in front of an employer.

Head officer: definitely! A curriculum vitae of 3 lines, this is not normal! You have to detail these lines! Okay you have experience as a sales agent, but what does it mean? Maybe you have social skills, maybe you like moving or... Everyone has to work on that!

Through the story of the ski instructor, the policy officer actually translates a human capital theory in a format that is understandable for youngsters and frames it as the device for their self-presentations in a "highly competitive society". Such a description contains a specific conception of the individual who continuously assesses his value and reinterprets his past trajectory in order to develop a consistent understanding of himself. In such a meaning system, every life experience is re-specified in an opportunity to reveal to the individual his own competencies and preferences. This self-reflexive movement, it is claimed, paves the way for a constant self-valuation process whose added value is strongly oriented towards the future, since it might require some time for it to provide its full potential in terms of gaining a place in the labour market. While the young person adheres to this call for self-reflexivity, this quote also transmits a specific conception of social integration that is purported in the social assistance scheme. It refers to a form of socialization, where users are put in a situation to define the main traits of their personality, express their motivations in order to make emerge a vocational and personal project that has to be further examined according to the circumstances and requirements of the labour-market. There is thus a demand for subjective investment in biographies as a condition for the inscription in social institutions (Astier & Duvoux 2006 : 7). The posture and discourse adopted by the interlocutors positioned the youngsters exactly in such a way: They did not directly "enforce" the constraint to behave as an autonomous individual, nevertheless they framed how the young beneficiaries are supposed to redefine themselves and their life, even when confronted with stigmatization and group-based labeling.

The same situation appeared when the youngsters met the apprenticeship commissioner: faced with a conception where individual motivation and self-mobilization are presented as the key to access an apprenticeship, youngsters reclaimed a more nuanced discussion on

what can be asked from young persons confronted with situations which are not in their own making, and for which they can hardly be held responsible. As the second interlocutor is asked about the issues he encountered as the most problematic with young apprentices, he argues that most conflicts on the workplace are due to a lack of motivation of young apprentices.

Y: So what you are telling us is that through our experiences, we become harder through our failures... but why is being in social assistance seen as such a bad signal by employers, I mean in such measures as we are, just because some things didn't work out as they should, I don't know, perhaps you have an idea why they look at us with such a critical eye, while according to you, we have become better and harder.

A.P: It is your duty to turn it into strength and to say "I have been there, I have made the move, and that allows me to deal with pressure and stress"

Y: ...But often it is hard to become valorised in an internship or an apprenticeship, or just like this, in a C.V. and a job application

A.P: Yes it is a label, a person with personal problems that one doesn't want to have in one's own firm...

Y: ... exactly

A.P: Yes but if you are going to an interview for a job in a bank counter or a hotel reception with a punk haircut and piercings everywhere, picture it out, I mean....

Y: but then it all depends where I am going to apply!

A.P: look, your application has to be highly above average, because you have more experience than others...

Within this section of the interview, it should be noted that the friendly (but critical) questioning of the young person regarding the interpretation of youngsters' situation made by the apprenticeship commissioner does not find an appropriate answer. A first response follows the logic of "Failed? Try harder!": While the subjective work of putting together a coherent and marketable self-presentation that can withstand the evaluative criteria of the employers is clearly attributed to youngsters, the latter find in the same time a harsh confirmation of the strict and exclusive signals that being in social assistance means for gatekeepers. At a second glance, we can differentiate attempts of the employer to "valorize" specific characteristics of the young persons, from which the building of a positive self-image could start. As the quote below shows, it is worthwhile to interpret the different distinctions (being older, able to be responsible, etc.) as specific cultural repertoires of evaluation that are inherent to and sustained by a specific social organization of transitions, that links "micro dynamics of exclusion to macro definitions of symbolic community and patterns of boundary work" (Lamont 2012). These are also culturally dominant definitions of worth that sustain the sorting processes performed by gatekeepers for the access to apprenticeships. As we see below, the proposal of the interlocutor rather amounts to proposing a shared matrix of worth (Lamont 2012), in an attempt to give a positive interpretation of the mostly disintegrated experience of youngsters. Officials' framing of

young participant's situation aims at producing a "marketable biography" that both withstands the evaluative criteria of employers and matches with institutional and organizational patterns. Last but not least, this attempt to reshape individuals' biography is deemed to be meaningful and satisfying in the eyes of the young persons.

"you start from the scratch, so your age bears an enormous potential, for an employer, because perhaps – it is not necessarily a good thing per se, but there are employers who like to have youngsters with a driving licence, because they can use the van and go see a client, if necessary, there are arguments for being older, for instance the responsibility which we were talking about earlier. You learned from your failures, if you talk only about your failures, he will see a person who failed, but if you talk of what you learned through failing, he will see another person, that is where this re-enforcement of your personality comes from..."

On "appropriate" aspirations – fashioning an individualized integration project

The policy officer further elaborated on the specific means provided by the local social assistance organization. Professional projects, as much as they should ideally be based on individual preferences and aspirations, should be "realistic and realizable", i.e. they should correspond to a market demand and be realizable in terms of the capacities and competences of the young persons. This restricts the emphasis on "internal motivations" from which professional projects ideally emerge and, by the same time, extends the range of demands to which young persons are exposed when participating in social assistance schemes. As a matter of fact, such schemes aim at creating an individual able to justify his/her vocational choices with reference both to his/her own individuality and to the systems of the different involved "publics" (e.g. employers, standardized tests of vocational counseling, etc.).

The issue of "realistic and realizable" professional projects fuelled a vivid debate between the invitee and the youngsters. The next excerpt is highly significant in terms of prescriptive statements. First, the choice of "artificial" examples of professions (opera-singer, astronaut), which would sound appropriate in the mouth of a very young child, conveys the idea that vocational aspirations of the youngsters are unrealistic. The explicit statement *"if you stay blocked with the idea of becoming an astronaut, you will never get out of social assistance"* proposes a simple solution to the fact of not finding an apprenticeship place: reduce one's expectations and future aspirations, or rather desist from "unrealistic" aspirations that are not viable for the realities of the labor market.

Head officer: a project needs to be realistic and realizable, if you tell me that you want to become opera singer but you never have made music, that will be complicated"

Y1: Yes, it will be complicated but not impossible!

Head officer: no, it is not impossible, but what is realistic? Is there a market for it? Can one earn a living out of it? Do I have the capacities to become an opera singer? All that, we can work on it, we can measure it... you can have help for doing so!

Y11: But what do you mean by non-realistic, then?

Y2: Becoming an astronaut!

Head officer: Exactly, (...) if you stay blocked with the idea of becoming an astronaut, you will never get out of social assistance...

Researcher: So everything else than astronaut is realistic and realizable? (laughs)

It is important to contextualize the debate cited above. Firstly, youngsters were seldom displaying excessively high or unrealistic future plans – rather after having already some work experience, most of them had either a quite down-to-earth and pragmatic way of engaging in their futures. A few youngsters even were in a total re-orientation process, not yet knowing what profession to choose. If they raised specific expectations towards their future job, they were rather pointed toward a conception of a “good job” in which labour is not restricted to a pure breadwinner activity. The value attached to a job clearly went beyond the monetary utility and included more complex processes of subjective valuation of “evaluative beings” (Sayer 2012). Not only was their “economic worth” as subjects of (labor)-market-evaluation and valuation at stake, but also the social recognition expressed through a specific social position as well as the subjective utilities attached to specific doings and beings. These subjective utilities, expressed in evaluative practices during the interviews ranged from the aspiration to be regarded as a valued member of society on to the degree to which a specific job allowed the development of own characteristics and a productive engagement with the world. This complex perception harshly contrasts with the image of young social assistance beneficiaries as “scroungers” or rational agents that choose welfare over work because of purely economic incentives.

Secondly, the quote shows how their concrete experience is embedded within the structural make-up of a specific mode of organizing transitions. While the employer-led dual apprenticeship vocational training system provides portable skills within one specific profession, entering the VET system requires to proceed to an early identification with a specific profession and an adaptation of that choice to the actual demand in terms of labor-force. Also, the relative powerful position of employers as gatekeepers to upper secondary education leads to a relative dominance of evaluative practices attached to the firm and human resources management.

We thus see that the economic and political arrangement of transitions in Switzerland are undergirded by a whole set of specific interpretation patterns that actors recognized, debated, contested, but also simply used as “taken for granted” rules to orient their behavior. It would be interesting to analyze how this “experience” of transitions differs from other transition regimes. We might expect that vocational choices within liberal regimes of skill formation like the US or the UK, mainly characterized by the provision of general skills through higher education, differ to large extent with those described here, both with regard to the experience and the modalities of choice-making.

5. Conclusions

This conclusion is structured into three main sections. The first part reflects on the research sessions with the young persons on a meta-analytical level: What happened in the research sessions, and what do we learn from it for the participation of young persons and their capacity to propose alternatives informed by their situated knowledge? The second part synthesizes the main findings of our research, recapitulates some topics brought into discussion by the young persons and summarizes central findings from an analytical perspective. How are transitions experienced, and how is this experience embedded within specific social relations? The third section contextualizes the report findings in the framework of the overall goals of the SocIEtY research-project and the preceding work packages.

What happened in the sessions?

On a meta-analytical level, it is necessary to reflect on what happened in the various research sessions. The analytical procedure does not provide a static image of the opinions of the research subjects, but attempts to create an artificial space with the aim of strengthening the capacity for reflection and analysis of the actors. Indeed, the youngsters were able to discuss their propositions, to critique some or to reject others. This clearly shows that youngsters, even when vulnerable, are able to demonstrate a “critical capacity” that allows them to think about their condition and living. They furthermore developed their own conception of a “good life”, subjected their aspirations to critical scrutiny and described what they have reason to value, as expressed in the manifold evaluative practices.

Other perspectives initially included within the research protocol have however not been fully implemented. It was only in very few cases that youngsters confronted the claims of their interlocutors, nor did the interview sessions take the form of a collective inquiry allowing deriving “policy solutions” or clear political statements. While several interpretations might be formulated, one can insist in particular on the inclination and ability of interlocutors to impose a pragmatic agenda over a more transformative one (suspected to be either too disconnected from the most urgent imperatives or implying changes that are mostly beyond their control). Taking advantage (at least implicitly) of their insider position and institutional legitimacy, the invited persons rather engaged in a process of clarification of the “social scenery” that they consider relevant in relation to youngsters’ narratives. In this perspective, one could retrospectively consider what happened during the confrontation sessions as a kind of “collective coaching” combining a notion of care with a dose of paternalism. Instead of interpreting this outcome in negative terms or as a research bias, we rather consider it as a magnifying glass revealing the kind of social relations in which disadvantaged young adults are inscribed when they are involved within institutional contexts.

Much more, the sessions resembled collective quests around the specification of a “common good”. Both the discussion and confrontation of the evaluative frameworks of the labour-market, the conditions to fulfill to be “recognized” as a member of society, as well as the critique about cases in which multiple matrices of valuation (Lamont 2012: 39) were reduced to a unique matrix, for instance economic productivity (vs. self-realization, “good work” etc.) are revealing in this respect. Apparently, this critique on the cultural repertoires with which persons are evaluated was not only pursued by the youngsters, but also by the interlocutors themselves. At a second glance, the collective discussions between youngsters and their interlocutors contained other elements. Often the institutional representatives tried to re-frame the experiences of youngsters into acceptable vocabularies of motives that made them intelligible and acceptable. This is especially visible when representatives of the adult world interpret one’s experience of discrimination, one’s negative experiences with several employers, or individual characteristics initially perceived as negative barriers for entering the labor-market, as resources that youngsters could/should mobilize in face-to-face interactions to enhance their value and integration potential. This practice of valorization of the individual took place in several cases and amounted to a discursive technique of normalization of the disrupted trajectories of the youngsters, in order to re-inscribe them within the institutional calendars of the Swiss life-course regime. When considering their main argumentative lines, interlocutors – as representatives of the Swiss VET system – often defended a certain “status quo” and tried to convince the youngsters to adhere to a positive vision on the state of affairs, allegedly allowing them to bring their contribution in it. By contrast, youngsters refuted this status quo on the basis of their own experiences. Nevertheless their relation to the cultural repertoires of the Swiss transition regime is an ambivalent one, as most are driven by a strong desire to take part and to be defined as worthy by the same repertoires they were criticizing only a few minutes ago.

As it comes to the youngsters themselves, many discussions and interactions can be interpreted as collective sense-making activities, in which participants came to a collectively agreed description of their experience and interpretations of the world. As abundantly described in the previous section (see in particular Group 1), these sense-making activities also entailed processes of “boundary drawing” through which participants developed a collective identity that allowed them to maintain a positive relation towards themselves in the context of precarious relations with institutions and lack of recognition. These allowed them to gain a certain dignity but this occurred also – to a certain extent – through labeling activities of other youth groups, considered as worst or more excluded than themselves.

Against this background, various outcomes can be underlined from youngsters’ participation in the collective research process. Amongst others, they had close and genuine encounters with relevant stakeholders and they learned, fastly how they had to put their arguments in order to be “intelligible” by different publics. They gathered a lot of concrete and first-hand information on how the VET system works. While the meeting with the different stakeholders amounted to a process of revalorization of the self, it entailed also a form of

indoctrination to the values of the institutions. Youngsters were several times invited to submit themselves to the recognition frameworks of the labour market and addressed as potential participants in VET, which also entails the risk of being evaluated as “small” and “worthless” once again.

What have we learned on the experience of transitions? : some condensed reflections

Our research had not only the aim of strengthening the analytical capacity of actors, but also aimed at the analysis of the social relations in which youth experience is embedded and of the principles, meanings and reasons that undergird the actions and orientations of the youngsters.

Amongst the most interesting points there is the position of the youngsters confronted with the injunction to autonomy. Most youngsters positively embraced the institutional imperative to be autonomous and “do it by themselves”, even in cases in which this took the form of a call for conceiving oneself as an “entrepreneurial self” and in which they were requested to mobilize their inner, most private resources. This became most obvious in the discussion about vocational choices, where youngsters were requested to choose a job in accordance with their internal motivations and individual characteristics. Particularly for youngsters for whom – due to their marginal position on the labor-market, few choices and options are available, the call to conceive oneself as an individual self-project found strong appeal.

An important finding concerns youngsters’ relation to time and vision of the future. While some are living in an existentially floating present (indeterminacy of individual selves, lacking control over own trajectory, etc.), the endorsement of an “individual self-project” might be a strategy to compensate for the indeterminacy of the future. Others, particularly those with more assets and resources to enter the labour market, were rather relying on the classical, normal biographical orientation patterns and less exposed to develop plans with unpredictable, unsecure outcomes. In this respect, the session with the apprenticeship commissioner showed how far the choice of a profession, as well as the entry barriers to an apprenticeship are characterized by the corporatist organisation of the Swiss transition regime: The dominance of firms for the recruitment of apprentices, and thus, their central position as gatekeepers for access to upper secondary education, translates into cultural repertoires that put identification with the firm, individual productivity, and specific market signals at the centre of the discussion. These features endorse an integrative and exclusionary function at the same time. For some, the strong identification with a specific profession allows to enter an apprenticeship despite negative market signals, while for others, the demand to “choose” a vocational field very early in life acts more as a factor of vulnerability of the self by highlighting their inability to act as responsible and autonomous individuals.

Our findings also indicate the specific role of transition measures within the Swiss transition regime, standing between obligatory schooling, the labour market and the young persons

themselves. On the one side they function as “intermediaries of the labour market”, as they transmit, translate and enforce the normative expectations of the world of work to the young persons. This takes on the one side the form of a “subjectivation” process in which the individual subjects himself to specific discourses, tests and evaluative frameworks, and becomes recognizable as a “labour-market subject” through this process. They function as a transmission belt for the demands of the world of work, which entail not only “objective” characteristics (scores achieved, psychological profile, number of applications, etc.) but also very “soft” skills, to be attributed to the sphere of “savoir-vivre” or “savoir-être”.

As illustrated by the posture adopted by the invited stakeholders, the main actors of the transition system are kin to address the young persons as having too high aspirations and, in the same time, as relatively autonomous and reflexive beings when it comes to choose a vocational pathway. This contained a potentially dilemmatic situation, at least for some youngsters: On the one side, the choice of a profession is deemed to correspond to individual aspirations and wishes, while on the other side, they only find very limited choice options. In our view, this is precisely the reason why the issue of motivation appears to be so central in the characterization of the relations between employers and young persons. While the category of “motivation” allows youngsters to link what they consider as their own preferences with a concrete professional project, it represents also a key attribute to be evaluated by employers, performing as an individualizing and justification device. Faced with a conception where individual motivation and self-mobilization are presented as the key to access an apprenticeship, youngsters reclaimed a more nuanced discussion on what can be asked from young persons when confronted with situations which are not in their own making, and for which they can hardly be held responsible. Nevertheless they did not fully refute the idea of motivation.

Our findings indicate also that experience of the institutionalized youth moratorium strongly differs according to the resources, social background and position of the youngsters within the Swiss transition system. For those at the lower strata of the educational system, the period between obligatory schooling and the entry into the labor market is mostly experienced as a “precarious period” to which risk and uncertainty about the future are associated. Accordingly, these young people strongly insist on the necessity to move from this situation. By contrast, those at the middle strata are much more able to rely on the validity of the “normal” status-passage, being just a matter of time. In comparison to the lower strata group (Group 1), they seemed less concerned about their future and depicted less “biographical planning” and “plan Bs” (“*what if I don’t do it*”). The lower the educational capital, the higher seems to be the injunction to find “biographical solutions to structural problems” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

Youngsters are asked to develop their “biographies” in the sense that they are deemed to pursue a temporal articulation between the biographical (their own characteristics, past experiences and resources) and the structural (the options available to them according to

the structure of the labour-market). As such, young persons are not indifferent to the institutional classification devices that the participation in a transition measure brings with it. They are, in Ian Hacking's famous terms, "interactive kinds" (Hacking 1999) that react to the descriptions and categorizations that the institutions as discursive environments put on them. Transition measures thus pursue some kind of secondary normalization, insofar their deviance from the normal biographical patterns is turned into a public problem. This amounts to a kind of "regulation" of the life-course: "People become clients of bureaucrats, social professionals, and experts such as doctors, psychologists, lawyers, and sociologists. Experts do not only provide services but redefine the identities and knowledge categories by which people perceive themselves and their situation" (Leisering 2003, p. 214)

As such, the transition measures also work on the de/re-valorisation of youngster's characteristics and prepare them to the biographical "tests" of the labour-market. In terms of participation and the responsiveness of the institutions, one can say that the institutional devices are open to the voices of the youngsters, insofar integration measures aim at fostering a "biographical self" able to project himself on the road to autonomy and elaborate a vocational project. This model of the welfare subject corresponds to the modern conception of the individual, who is able to formulate a life-plan, to justify it in front of welfare professionals and human resources managers. But we might expect that these voices are heard only insofar they conform to specific forms and vocabularies, insofar they comply with the imperative of feasibility (individual projects are deemed to be "realistic and realizable") and insofar they resonate within the provided pathways of institutions. It thus comes as no surprise that this conception stands in contrast with the concrete experience of the youngsters. Especially those youngsters with weak labor market credentials were experiencing their transitions as something that "happens" to them, that is experienced in terms of reacting to demands from institutions. Many described their transition in terms of passive processing by institutional classification and subjective loss of control, rather than something resulting from their own agency. For those young people with low resources and educational credentials, entering a "transition measure" was perceived as a decoupling of biographical and structural time. Youngsters' aspirations were far from simply being crude projections helping to give a sense of control over own trajectory. They were strongly related to their conceptions of the "good life" and intimately shaped by the make up of transition system, as they strive to find a way to find a professional activity that allows them to be "productive" and integrated members of society on the one side, and that is subjectively fulfilling on the other.

Young people highlighted the role of unwanted and sometimes stigmatizing classifications, (educational level, apprenticeship drop-out, etc.) as penalizing factors to match the normative expectations of the adult world. The collective stigma of being a "transition measure participant" or being in the lower tiers of the Swiss school system was seen as an additional disadvantage, especially when it comes to job applications. Most young people reacted with a strong sense of self-assertiveness and with highlighting values such as

personal motivation, being a hard-working person and playing by the rules, values that permitted them to maintain a sense of respectability. We thus see that these youngsters are not refuting main values that exist in society, but that they maintain a strong adherence to those evaluative frameworks that eventually permits them a fragile recognition as a “good” member of society.

6. Policy-relevant implications

Despite the fact that neither the youngsters nor the invitees did present and propose concrete solutions (often, even the definition of the problem was far from unanimous), some indications can be given when considering the distinct framing of the issue at stake, one, from the situated, vested interests of the interlocutors on the one side, and on the other side, from the young persons, drawing on their experiential knowledge for the assessment of “transition policies”.

Youngsters’ interlocutors highlighted, mostly in line with our description of the policy frames in WP 3 and 4, that youngsters’ VET-integration as a concern for the Swiss economy (skills shortage, nobody chooses the less attractive jobs) and as a concern for public expenditure (reducing social assistance numbers) required an “investment approach” (invest now in order to reduce expenditure later). Furthermore, as highlighted in WP 3, VET-integration is seen as the problem of a “small group” (3% of youngsters that “drop-out”; which would be mainly due to the wrong incentives of social policies for youth). According to official statements, youngsters have to be made responsible for their job choices, and transition has to become more effective (through the use of compulsory standardized assessments for vocational counseling).

The youngsters, in turn, highlight that they need more time to choose, and say that they are looking for a job that allows them self-realization. They do not reject the idea that they have to choose a job and even to adapt, but deplore non-fairness due to discrimination (in all three groups). The placement logic (no youth left behind) stands in contrast with the young persons’ perception. They do not want to simply “find something” that bridges their transition period, but rather attempt to find something subjectively meaningful. Some youngsters stated that “we are here by default” and not because it would constitute a subjectively meaningful alternative, but rather a “last resort” with the alternative being to do nothing. Others valorized the relief provided by the institutional schemes that allowed them not to be ready instantly. Further analyses should take into account the different usage and utilization patterns of schemes by youngsters. Designed with a specific policy goal in mind, they are appropriated quite differently by different young people.

7. Literature

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CASE STUDY SCOTLAND: Understanding Young People's Experiences of Looking for Work Using Participatory Research: Findings from Scotland

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Executive Summary

(6) Introduction

This chapter presents findings of a photovoice research project undertaken with young people engaged with employment support programmes in Edinburgh, Scotland.

(7) Research questions and research design

Nine young people, aged between 16 and 20 years, participated in the research, drawn from two employment support providers. Photovoice employs photography and group dialogue to deepen understanding of a community issue or concern. The methodology was used in order to enable participants to represent their lives; to promote critical dialogue; and to reach policy-makers (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 2006).

The research question addressed was 'to what extent and in what way do social policies and practices take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously.' Through the photographs and discussions we sought to understand young people's experiences, ideas and aspirations; and what they think are the most important issues for young people looking for work in Edinburgh today.

(8) Research Findings

- ***Inequality and disadvantage in the labour market***

The young people felt that they were disadvantaged in the labour market compared to other people. They felt that they faced challenges in finding work, especially related to wider structural conditions. The young people often felt stranded, excluded from the labour market due to forces beyond their control.

They did not feel that school had given them the right skills for finding work. Some had not known when they left school about how to apply for jobs and how difficult it could be finding work. Some could not see the relevance of the school subjects that they studied to

the skills needed for work. They wished they had been able to study subjects directly related to their interests and the types of jobs they wanted to get.

The young people also felt that they were not being 'given a chance' by employers. Several felt that their lack of work experience was a major challenge to them finding work. The young people outlined the situation that they found themselves in of not being able to get experience because employers would not offer them an opportunity because they lacked experience.

- ***Aspirations***

The young people all wanted to find work and most had a specific job in mind. They wanted to do jobs that involved an activity that they enjoyed, or follow in the footsteps of an inspirational person in their lives. The young people were prepared to put in the effort to achieve their goals. They wanted to be in control of their lives and be independent.

However, while aspirations were present they were not always clearly expressed. Often the aspirations could be difficult to hear amongst all the 'white noise'; e.g. the frustration expressed by the young people of not being able to find work. The young people's aspirations could also be quite narrow. Some of the young people also felt that attending the employment support programmes had opened up their eyes to the opportunities available to them. Although most had plans for the future or specific jobs in mind, some felt a pull to accept any job that came along or were uncertain about their future.

- ***Participation***

There is evidence that the young people were participating and having voice in shaping the activities of the programmes. The young people felt listened to by the project workers and did not feel forced to take part in activities. In this arena the voices of young people are being taken seriously.

The young people felt that the programmes they attended were useful and were giving them the skills needed to find work. There was an acknowledgement that ultimately participation was beneficial and that the aims of the programme were broadly in line with their aspirations of finding work. However, it could at times be difficult to stay motivated to carry on going to the programmes. The money they got for attending was often important in keeping them motivated.

It was not always obvious to the young people taking part why they should care about politics or policy. Even if they were interested, they did not always know what might be wrong with it, or how it could be better. Some felt very angry and frustrated with politicians who were not felt to understand the challenges young people face looking for work. Others lacked confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the political system, which could potentially hold them back from taking up opportunities to have their voices heard.

(9) Discussion and reflections

The findings demonstrate that the young people who participated in the research had aspirations and ambitions towards achieving certain outcomes in their lives, framing a desirable future, beyond dreams, expectations and educational/occupational prospects. As such there was no evidence of a 'poverty of aspiration', a notion which has underpinned much of the recent political rhetoric surrounding reforms to the welfare system in the UK. However, the findings highlight the constraints to young people's capability to aspire and draw attention to the facts that the capacity to aspire is unevenly distributed in society (Appadurai, 2004).

Young people's participation in employment support programmes can be argued to be transformative, giving young people voice and choice in the labour market. The programmes are supporting young people to be able to participate in the labour market e.g. providing skills that may be lacking. However, the extent to which programme participation is transformative is limited by wider socio-economic structures.

In terms of young people's participation in policy-making processes/politics there is diversity of experiences and opinions. For some, it was not obvious to them why it is in their interests to care about these issues. A lack of confidence in their own knowledge and understanding of the political system also held some back from engaging.

It is difficult to say to what extent photovoice empowered and gave voice to the participants. Participants were asked to make a big effort in order to make their voice heard (i.e. taking a photograph on a topic that they would not necessarily be taking photographs about in the course of normal events). The issue of 'problem definition' was also important during the research process; questions need to be asked about the extent of this being participant driven research as it was still a researcher initiated project.

(10) Conclusions

The chapter highlights the importance of taking young people's voices seriously, as they draw attention to important issues in their lives not necessarily being addressed by policy. The young people felt that they were disadvantaged in the labour market and lacked choice. There are some spaces where young people's voices are being heard, but others where young people do not feel confident to express their views and aspirations for their lives.

(11) Policy relevant implications

- How can schools better prepare young people for the workplace?
- How can we encourage employers to give young people a chance?
- How can we engage young people with policy-making processes that they feel removed from or lack the confidence to engage with?
- Is it possible to give voice to disengaged young people on their own terms and will policy-makers listen to young people who are expressing their views on their own terms?

Introduction

This chapter presents a Capability Approach informed analysis of findings of a photovoice research project undertaken with young people engaged with employment support programmes in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Capability Approach, developed by Sen (1985, 1992, 1998, 2009), is centred on the freedom and opportunity individuals have to make choices that they value. It focuses upon the potential ability of the individual to achieve a functioning (e.g. a job) that they value in the context of the wider environment in which they are embedded (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007).

Edinburgh is not typically conceived of as a ‘vulnerable’ area. However, while Edinburgh as a whole maintains a good or average position on most indicators, there are pockets of low income, high out-of-work benefit receipt, poor educational outcomes and high area deprivation (Egdell & Graham, 2014). Youth unemployment has been a priority area especially since the 2009-2010 the School Leaver Destination Return showed that the local authority was the worst performing in Scotland in terms of school leavers from publicly funded secondary schools²¹ entering positive destinations²² (Skills Development Scotland, 2010; City of Edinburgh Council, 2011).

Photovoice employs photography and group dialogue to deepen understanding of a community issue or concern. The methodology was used in order to enable participants to represent their lives; to promote critical dialogue; and to reach policy-makers (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, 2006). Through the photographs and discussions we sought to understand young people’s experiences, ideas and aspirations; and what they think are the most important issues for young people looking for work in Edinburgh today.

Having presented a detailed account of the methodology employed the key themes emerging from the findings are analysed from a Capability Approach:

- **Inequality and disadvantage in the labour market**, with particular reference to young people’s capability for work, i.e. their real freedom to choose the job/ activity they have reason to value (Bifulco, 2012).
- **Participation and young people’s capability for voice**: *“the capacity to express one’s opinions and thoughts and to make them count in the course of public discussion”* (Bonvin & Thelen, 2003). It cannot be assumed that participation will lead to equality; and that even if people participate that their voices are heard or effect change. Participation may also be ‘coercive’ and the costs of non-participation need to be considered (Bonvin, 2013; Ley, 2013).
- Young people’s **aspirations and the capacity to aspire**. As outlined by Baillergeau and Duyvendak (2013) the capability to aspire, moves beyond the capability for voice. As such the capability to aspire relates to being able to define what is meant to be a ‘good

²¹ Excludes schools in the independent sector and all special schools.

²² Positive destinations are: education, employment, training and voluntary work. From 2010/11 ‘activity agreements’ (where a young person is working with an advisor to achieve a positive outcome) have been included as a separate category.

life' (i.e. what one aspires to) and not have to adapt one's preferences (Nussbaum, 2000); to contest and alter one's situation; and to understand desirable alternatives (Appadurai, 2004; Walker, 2006).

Having presented and discussed these themes, reflections are made about the photovoice methodology. Finally conclusions are presented, as well as the policy relevant implications of the findings.

1. Research questions and research design

This section presents the research questions and further details of the research design.

The overall research question addressed was: *to what extent and in what way do social policies and practices take the perspectives of young people seriously*. The photovoice research project also sought to address three specific questions:

1. What are the most important issues facing young people looking for work in Edinburgh today?
2. How can we improve the lives of, and increase the appropriateness of opportunities for, young people looking for work in Edinburgh?
3. Do young people think decision-makers understand the issues facing young people looking for work in Edinburgh today?

Nine young people aged between 16 and 20 years, from two employment support providers, participated in the research. Six were female and three male. There were also five young people who withdrew from the research (i.e. young people who participated in the initial workshop but who did not take part in the follow-up group discussion). A third provider was also involved in the project although all the young people from this group withdrew from the research.

The project had seven stages and was undertaken between October 2014 and May 2015.

Stage 1: Initiation phase/pilot workshops (July-December 2014): During the 'Initiation phase/pilot workshops' we engaged with different stakeholders in order to develop common interest about how the research would proceed.

First initial research plans were made drawing on the photovoice literature and guidance (e.g. Wang & Burris (1997), Wang *et al.*, (1998), Wang & Jones-Redwood (2001), Wang (2006), Dahan *et al.* (2007), Kreig & Roberts (2007), Palibroda *et al.*, (2009), Powers *et al.*, (2007), Bandurraga *et al.* (2013)) and earlier findings from the SoCIeTY project (Egdell & Graham, 2014; Egdell *et al.*, 2014) paying particular attention to the young people's narratives. The initial plans were presented at the SoCIeTY partner meeting in Vienna in September 2014 and revised based on the feedback received.

We contacted potential gatekeeper groups (i.e. youth employment support providers) to assess interest in the proposed work and get feedback on the plans. Discussions were also

held with colleagues in the School of Arts and Creative Industries, Edinburgh Napier University regarding the technical and artistic aspects of photography, and with an online photography platform about using this platform for the research. We also made a successful application for research ethics approval from Edinburgh Napier University Business School Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Stage 2: Introduction to photovoice workshop (February-April 2015): Participants were invited to attend a workshop to learn about the project and taking photographs. The technical photography aspects (e.g. light, framing, composition) and how to read photographs in terms of 'objectivity' and subjectivity' were presented by photography students from the School of Arts and Creative Industries, Edinburgh Napier University.

Ethics and participant safety were also discussed during this workshop. Safety ground rules were outlined to participants: no photo is worth any personal danger and participants should not take any risks; participants must not take photographs of other people without their verbal consent; and participants must ensure that their photographs do not present an individual in a false light or disclose potentially embarrassing facts about an individual (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, n.d.; Lorenz & Webster, n.d.; Metropolitan Area Planning Council, n.d.; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; 10; Dahan *et al.*, 2007; Bandurraga *et al.*, 2013).

As the project used an online photography platform, asking participants to post images to a personal gallery (see Stage 3 for further details), we also discussed ethical issues around this at the workshop. As the photographs in each user's personal gallery are publicly visible, time was spent discussing with participants about the need to act as 'curators' self-moderating their images – considering the power of photographs in representing them, how do they want the world to see them etc. While participants decided on whether they used their own name or a pseudonym when creating their online gallery, and whether they revealed their location details, it was also outlined that there was always the chance that somebody could recognise them through their photographs.

Stage 3: Photovoice assignments (February-April 2015). The participants spent approximately two weeks taking photographs. For the first two groups, we asked the participants to submit one photograph a day, alongside a short commentary if they wished, to the online platform in order that they create a daily photo journal.

Some participants chose not to use the online photography platform, preferring to email their photographs to the project workers on their employment support programme, who then forwarded the images to us. In early Spring 2015 the online photography platform went into liquidation and therefore those participating after this point were asked to submit their photographs to us by email.

Photographs were taken primarily using the participants' own smartphones although cameras were available to those who did not have access to a smartphone.

Stage 4: Reflection group meeting /group discussion (February-April 2015). Participants were asked to select the photographs that were the most meaningful to them so far and

discuss them with the group. Participants also discussed their experiences of the assignment and reflected on how their images addressed the research questions. We also asked follow up research questions. We audio recorded the discussions with the permission of participants.

Stages 5 and 6: Second cycle of photography taking and reflection group meeting /group discussion (February-April 2015). Only one group of young people wanted to/were able to²³ undertake a second cycle of photography taking and group discussion. However, while members of this group did continue taking some photographs they did not attend the second group discussion meeting. These young people have been counted as ‘participants’ as they did complete one round of photography taking and group discussion.

Stage 7: Data analysis and verification of research results workshop (May 2015). We undertook data analysis in the first instance, and then verified this analysis with the wider research group through two workshops with the participants and project workers from the gatekeeper employment support providers. At these workshops we presented the findings and asked for feedback about whether the participants agreed with how we represented the issues discussed, and whether any important issues had been missed. We also asked any previously unanswered questions that had emerged during data analysis. The information obtained fed into the findings presented in this report. We audio recorded the discussions with the permission of participants.

In addition to the workshops a brief summary of the draft research findings was sent to potential key research users (e.g. commissioners, policy makers, service providers) for their comments and feedback on the results.

2. Research Findings

This section presents the research findings in relation to: inequality and disadvantage in the labour market, aspiration and participation.

3.1 Inequality and disadvantage in the labour market

In the UK, employment activation has tended to take a ‘Work First’ approach concerned with rapid labour market entry, where jobseekers are encouraged to take any job as quickly as possible. There is often limited consideration of employment sustainability and progression, and jobseekers may be compelled to engage in activities or be at risk of sanction (Grover & Piggott, 2013; McQuaid & Fuertes, 2014; Fuertes *et al.*, 2014). The approach focuses on the attributes and deficits of individual jobseekers, employability and participation; rather than participation in ‘quality’ employment and addressing softer outcomes (e.g. increased confidence) and wider socio-economic barriers).

²³ In some cases the young people were at the end of their programmes with the employment support providers, and would have not been attending the programme if, and when, a second cycle of photography taking and group discussion was undertaken.

The young people felt that they were disadvantaged in the labour market, in that they identified barriers to them finding work. They were aware of 'structural' disadvantages in the labour market, and when asked about the challenges that they faced in finding work, they focused on these issues. It should also be noted that the general lack of discussion of individualised barriers emphasised in policy does not necessarily mean that they are not an issue from the point of view of young people. It may be that the young people did not feel comfortable talking about these issues in a group context or with us. Indeed previous research has shown that project workers spend a lot of time building trust and rapport with young people in order to understand the individual barriers that they might be facing (Egdell *et al.*, 2015; Egdell & McQuaid, 2014).

One of the key 'structural' disadvantages discussed by the participants was school. We asked the participants what motivated them to attend the employment support programmes. Some of the responses focused the usefulness of the programmes. One participant for example stated that they knew they were going to get something (i.e. skills and a job) through attending the programme. They had not felt this way about school.

"At school and stuff, not that it wasn't helpful, but it wasn't as helpful as like being here [at the employment support provider]. I know I am going to get something out of this. When I left school it was like what do I do now?" (Young female)

The participants did not feel that school was equipping with the skills needed in the labour market, and generally they had to take on a lot of responsibility (that they were not necessarily well prepared for) in a short space of time in their transition from school to looking for work. Some participants outlined how they had not known when they had left school how to apply for a job, the importance of a CV and how difficult it could be finding work.

"I didn't know how to apply for jobs, I didn't have a CV...I knew what a CV was but I didn't know you desperately needed one. I didn't know how difficult it was to get a job either" (Young female)

Some of the participants did mention receiving careers advice while they were at school, but they did not find it particularly helpful and the advice given was not necessarily aimed towards young people who wanted to find work rather than continue in education.

Young people could not see how the subjects that they had studied at school could help them find work. Mention was made by some of wanting to be able to study, and focus only on, subjects that were directly related to the jobs that they wanted.

"Say you wanted to be a photographer or a youth worker or something, there's not like classes in school where you got to do that. And you are still getting pushed into staying in school and you're not, like the stuff that you are learning isn't going to help you like a job or anything like that" (Young female)

However these views also need to be set against the feeling among some participants that they had had to make choices about the subjects they wanted to study in secondary school

at a very young age (e.g. at 13 or 14) and that these might not necessarily match with their aspirations at aged 19. They were not necessarily thinking about what they wanted to do in the future when picking their subjects.

“I was just thinking about getting home at the end of the day... I wasn’t really thinking about work at that point because I was only about thirteen” (Young female)

As well as the barriers created by not being equipped with the right labour market skills by school, the young people also felt that they were not being ‘given a chance’ by employers, and the self-fulfilling situation this creates. Several participants spoke of their lack of work experience being a major challenge to them getting into work. However, the young people outlined the situation that they found themselves in of not being able to get experience because employers would not offer them an opportunity because they lacked experience. The young people wanted to be ‘given a chance’ by employers, e.g. in the form of a short period of training or a trial period of employment. However, they felt that employers would not do this because there would be another candidate with experience and higher qualifications whom employers would give the chance to.

“Researcher: So what would be the one thing that would help you get a job? Just getting experience?”

[General agreement]

Young male 1: Maybe if people would give you a chance, rather than asking for experience.

Young male 2: Aye, just two weeks training, or a week’s training.

Researcher: Why do you think employers don’t give you a chance?

Young male 2: Cause there’ll be somebody experienced

Young male 1: Aye if there’s somebody with experience and high qualifications

Researcher: So that’s the only difference between you and somebody who gets a job? Experience?”

Young male 1: Aye, most likely

[Nobody disagrees]”

Interestingly some participants did outline activities that they had or were undertaking (apart from the employment support programmes) that could be an indication of work experience (e.g. volunteering, paid work) but at the same time they felt that they were being held back by a lack of experience.

“I volunteer to help...I assist the [teacher] at a primary school like afterschool...clubs and stuff” (Young female)

It must be recognised that policy to some extent recognises the importance of giving young people this first opportunity in the labour market. Key employability programmes in Edinburgh include the Edinburgh Guarantee; a vision that all young people in Edinburgh leave school into a positive destination. In order to achieve this the City of Edinburgh Council is working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase the number of jobs, education and training opportunities being made available to young people (Egdell & Graham, 2014). The employment support programmes that the participants were engaged with also offered opportunities for training placements. Some of the young people also discussed undertaking work experience while they had been at school. For some this work experience only lasted for a short period (i.e. a few days) but one participant had undertaken regular work experience over a longer time frame.

However, the participants’ experiences do point to a disconnection, for some at least, between the curriculum that schools are delivering and the skills required in the labour market. More time may need to be spent helping to develop CVs and seek out work experience opportunities for young people before the school leaving age of 16. In Edinburgh there are opportunities for work experience and vocational training at school²⁴, but the participants still felt that they lacked experience. Youth employment support providers do fill the gap in providing young people with job-seeking skills etc. but questions need to be raised about whether this is just a ‘sticking plaster’ for a problem that needs a more systematic solution within schools. What is apparent from the participants’ narratives is that they feel stranded in the middle of all this, excluded from the labour market due to forces beyond their control.

3.2 Aspirations

It has been argued that the reform of the welfare state in the UK has focused on the creation of ‘aspirational citizens’ who will ‘better’ themselves and take greater individual responsibility for their wellbeing (Raco 2009). Indeed current reforms to the welfare system have been in part grounded in assumptions that the welfare system has created generations of people who lack hope and aspiration. For example the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions stated that:

“Over a number of years, the welfare system - well intentioned as it has been - has created ghettos of worklessness where generations have grown up without hope or aspiration” (Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, 30 July 2010: Speech - Building Benefits for the 21st Century)²⁵.

The reforms to the welfare system made by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (May 2010 - May 2015) focused on improving work incentives (e.g. through

²⁴ For example the JET (Job, Education and Training) programme: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20163/opportunities-for-young-people/75/jet-job-education-and-training-programme (Accessed 29 April 2014).

²⁵ www.gov.uk/government/speeches/building-benefits-for-the-21st-century (Accessed 09 June 2015).

increased conditionality and sanctioning of welfare benefits; and ensuring that it pays more to be in work than claiming out of work benefits) and simplifying the benefits system (Graham *et al.*, 2014). The underlying assumption of these reforms is that individuals do not want to work – although recent research has challenged this. For example it has been found that even those with fairly debilitating conditions express a desire to work (Lister *et al.*, 2014; Graham *et al.*, 2014). The political rhetoric justifying reforms to the welfare system has also emphasised the need to tackle the “*entrenched culture of worklessness and dependency...reaching those individuals for whom worklessness has become a way of life*” (Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, 31 October 2012: Speech - The GovKnow conference: Social Justice, Transforming Lives)²⁶. Again research has questioned this notion of ‘intergenerational cultures of worklessness’, especially the idea, which has been dominant in the political rhetoric, of there being families where three generations have never worked (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012; Macdonald *et al.*, 2014).

The participants in this current research discussed and reflected upon their job aspirations. They all wanted to find work and most had a specific job in mind. We asked the young people why they wanted to do these jobs in particular. Reasons given included the jobs being linked to: an activity they enjoyed (e.g. looking after animals, cooking or drama); work experiences that they had already had (e.g. babysitting for friends and family); providing an opportunity to travel or leave the area where they were living; and an inspirational person from when they were growing up. For example one participant wanted to become a chef as he enjoyed cooking at home and another wanted to become a youth worker having attended youth clubs in childhood and being inspired by the youth workers.

“I just want to follow in my brother’s footsteps though. He used to work in [kitchens] when I was younger... [and] I was always cooking, I was always trying things. I’m pretty good at cooking” (Young male)

“Since like primary [school] I have been going to youth clubs, so it’s like the way they’re working it just seems such an enjoyable job, it seems more important than anything else” (Young female)

For the participants a ‘good job’ was a job related to an activity that they enjoy doing or a job that is seen as worthwhile and rewarding. They were perhaps less concerned with jobs that were well paid. A good job was a job that was rewarding to them in different ways.

“I’d wouldn’t work for the money, I’d work for what I wanted to do...because it’s not all about the money” (Young female)

The discussions about young people’s aspirations countered two stereotypes: (1) that young people are not willing to put in the effort to achieve their goals; and (2) that young people lack role models.

²⁶ www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-govknow-conference-social-justice-transforming-lives (Accessed 09 June 2015).



Photograph 1

In response to the first stereotype, the participant narratives show that young people were prepared to put in the effort to achieve their goals. **Photograph 1** was taken by the participant to represent the journey they made each day to attend the employment support provider.

Other participants also took photographs representing their daily journey. The participants discussed having to get up early in order to arrive on time, the long journeys they made, walking to and from bus stops, getting a coffee on their journey to help them wake up, and listening to music to pass the time. For some this was a difficult routine to get into and maintain.

“I get the bus at half past and it’s just you’re on the bus for ages and you want to fall asleep but you can’t. It’s really hard to do that early in the morning” (Young female)

In response to the second stereotype, in two of the discussion groups the participants talked in particular about role models in their lives who inspired them. Some mentioned that family members did, or had done, the jobs that they aspired to do in the future. However, the participants

did not necessarily feel that it was because of these family members that they wanted to work in a particular sector. Other participants cited particular celebrities as being an inspiration to them. These celebrities were felt to be an inspiration as they were hard working, had overcome challenges in their personal lives to achieve their success, and were confident to be themselves.

“Researcher: Who is an inspiration? Who is he?”

Young female: He is a singer...heavy metal singer in a rock band...

Researcher: Why is he an inspiration to you?

Young female: Cos he shows you can achieve your dreams...he is amazing

Researcher: Did he have to work quite hard to get to where he is?

Young female: He used to be bullied quite a lot, he went through a situation. Then he proved them wrong by setting up a band and then he is famous”



Photograph 2

Generally the participants' narratives point to a desire to be in control of their lives and be independent e.g. being able to earn money. One participant took a photograph of a poster with a quotation by Buckminster Fuller²⁷ (**Photograph 2**) which states that *"The best way to predict the future is to design it"*. When talking about the photograph at the group discussion the participants talked about the need to take control of their lives and have a plan for what they wanted to achieve. This was not always necessarily straightforward.

"You hear everybody moan about I haven't got a job, I don't know what I am meant to do, like I am going to be on the dole. Well you're like if you actually sat down like and figured out what you wanted and decided and made like a life plan. I don't even have a life plan but..." (Young female)

However, while aspirations were present amongst the participants, they were not always clearly expressed. Often the participants' aspirations could be difficult to hear amongst all the 'white noise'; e.g.

the frustration expressed by the young people of not being able to find work, and the desire to conform to the 'norm' of apathy in front of their peers. The young people's aspirations could also be quite narrow, something acknowledged by some of the participants, highlighting the 'opaqueness' of the labour market noted earlier in the SoCIeTY project (Egdell & Graham, 2014). For example one participant talked about how attending the employment support programme had opened their eyes to the range of opportunities available to them. Previously they had a limited understanding of the different types of

²⁷ A 20th century inventor and visionary. See for more information: <http://bfi.org/about-fuller> (Accessed 18 June 2015).

careers in the labour market and the extent of the opportunities they could consider with their qualification level. Participants talked about how they might have an idea of what kinds of jobs they wanted to do but that there might be other careers that they might also enjoy. By taking part in the employment support programmes they were becoming more aware of the opportunities available to them.

“They have been telling us careers and that I didn’t even know, I knew you could do, but I didn’t think that I could do with my qualifications and everything. They’re kind of helping us get a bigger range” (Young female)

Another participant described how taking part in the programme had motivated them to take more of an interest, and they were now exploring opportunities (training and work placements) to work in a particular job.

“Before I came here I wasn’t really interested in anything, I just didn’t bother... I’m more motivated [now]” (Young male)

The young people did indicate that there could be some challenges in fulfilling their aspirations. One group when asked about how confident they felt about the future had mixed views, with one participant in particular citing anxiety about getting a job, while the others were not worried at all, or would ‘take things as they came’.

“Young male 1: I’m not worried at all!”

Young male 2: I’m not too sure about [my future]. I do stress about it a lot... getting a job, getting my CV out, just everything....

Young male 3: I’ll just take it as it comes”

In another group a participant identified the interview process in particular as a barrier to them achieving their goals as they lacked confidence.

While the young people did have aspirations and specific jobs in mind there was also an indication from their narratives that some felt a pull to accept any job opportunity that came along, even if it was not in the sector where they wanted to work or meant that they could not go to college to undertake further training.

“Before I came here I only wanted to do youth work and then like coming here I would settle for any job at the moment. Because it’s purely like that desperate to like earn money and just be in a job, I would basically do anything. Even if you have got one dream that you wanted to do you’d still do anything before you get there” (Young female)

One participant did however state that while they would accept any job they would still seek out ways to get involved in the area that they were most passionate about - working with animals.

“If someone offered me a job in like a shop or something and I was going to get paid more than I would for working with animals, then I would take that but I’d still want to work with animals...I want to earn money so I can buy things!...I’d be quite happy to [take a job]” (Young female)

The young people might feel that, given the lack of opportunities open to them, any job is better than no job at all. For others a job, regardless of the sector and/or position, might be seen as giving them some experience, which could potentially help them to achieve longer term ambitions of getting a particular job, as a lack of experience is a key challenge facing them.

Other participants did not necessarily feel this pull. Some stated for example that they would feel able to ‘hold out’ for the right job opportunity for them to come along. One young person also had very clearly expressed aspirations and was very focused about how he would achieve them. He took a series of photographs representing his aspiration to join the army (**Photographs 3 and 4**).



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

“Can I put [my photos] in order? ...That’s what it was meant to be, something from where you were, where you wanted to be, and how you’d get there or something like that... [Photograph 3 is] where I was ... And [Photograph 4] is where I want to go and [photograph of a Skills Development Scotland²⁸ centre (not shown)] is how I’m going to get there” (Young male)

²⁸ The national skills agency of Scotland. See for more information: www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/ (Accessed 01 May 2015).

3.3 Participation

Concerns over youth political disengagement and apathy have been evident for several decades. However, research into the issue has highlighted and argued that the problem is not political apathy amongst young people, but the disconnection of young people from the political process; they may feel disenchanting and alienated from political parties, politicians, and government, and that they the power to effect change processes (Sloam, 2007; Harris *et al.*, 2010; Henn & Foard, 2011, 2013; Checkoway, 2011; Sloam, 2012; Geniets, 2010).

Earlier findings from the SoCIeTY project identified mechanisms, platforms and champions that have been developed to increase the engagement and participation of young people, developing their capability for voice, in policy development and implementation. However, these channels for participation are not necessarily engaging for young people, and participatory activities may not be viewed as worthwhile by young people who may feel removed from the policy-making process (Egdell & Graham, 2014; Egdell *et al.*, 2014). Barriers and challenges to young people's participation identified in the literature have included: relying too heavily on formal participation mechanisms; tokenism; 'over consultation' of some groups, and lack of consultation of others; consultation rather than dialogue; lack of time and consideration of sensitivities; the constraints of organisational structures; lack of support to help young people communicate their views; not feeding back to young people; and the use of adult processes and structures that exclude or may not be engaging for children and young people (Lightfoot & Sloper, 2003; Vromen & Collin, 2010; Mallan & Greenaway, 2011; Tisdall, 2011; SCCYP, 2013a/b). Earlier findings from the SoCIeTY project also found that while mechanisms are built into programmes for feedback and evaluation and there is some flexibility in programmes to meet the needs of young people, the fundamentals of programmes stay the same because of the needs of commissioners, thus hampering young people's capabilities for voice and choice (Egdell & Graham, 2014; Egdell *et al.*, 2014).

The young people's narratives from this current research develop these themes further. The first theme is young people's participation in the employment support programmes, their opportunities for voice in these programmes and their motivations. In this arena the voices of young people are being taken seriously. There is evidence from the participants' narratives that they were participating and having voice in shaping the activities of the programmes; and that there was partnership and mutual decision-making with project workers. For example, in one group, work placements could be identified by the project workers, or the young people could identify opportunities themselves. In another group the project workers offered them options in terms of the activities they could undertake.

"We didn't have to [take part in certain activities], we always have the choice" (Young male)

A young person also spoke of feeling confident enough and able to discuss with the project workers their unhappiness of not being able to take part in an activity that they thought would be beneficial to them. They had not understood why they were unable to take part in

the activity and challenged the project workers about this. Generally the feeling amongst participants was that they were treated like adults in the programmes.

"I'd say this is better than school, because you actually get treated like an adult"
(Young female)

Young people's motivation to participate in the programmes is worth reflecting on further here. As outlined previously the routine of attending a programme could be challenging, but the young people continued to attend because they knew they would get something out of the programme. Ultimately they acknowledged that participation was beneficial and that the aims of the programme were broadly in line with their own aspirations of finding work. Some participants felt that if they did not attend the programme and job searched at home instead, they would not have the same level of motivation. The young people participated in the programmes because they saw them as something worthwhile.

"You don't get forced and you get motivated to actually do it. If you were in your house you wouldn't do it [job searching etc.]. You would say I will do it later...But then here it is like what you have to do so it does help..." (Young female)

But there was a fine balance in young people's motivation to participate in the programmes. One participant who had attended a programme for several months outlined how their motivation on the programme had declined over time. They felt that getting a job that they enjoyed that would reignite their enthusiasm.

"I think the first morning I came here I was excited because like after school I had done a few months of nothing so I was kind of doing something but then I have got used to it...it's like I don't feel motivated anymore...if I had a job, if I had a job I enjoyed I would like to go in, I wouldn't mind getting up earlier to go to a job" (Young female)

Financial reasons were also an important factor in young people's participation in the employment support programmes, and making them worthwhile activities, as the young people needed to cover their outgoings.

"If you don't come you don't get any money. I need money to live off because I have got to pay for a bus pass and things like that. So I kind of need money..." (Young female)

Another participant outlined that they could opt out of activities but sometimes this could mean that they would lose payment for that day, although sometimes an alternative activity was offered.

The second theme related to participation is young people's participation in policy-making processes. Here evidence is presented drawing on the narratives of the photovoice participants as well as the observations that we made.

When recruiting young people to participate in the photovoice project, the aims of the research were presented to groups of young people. In these presentations and discussions we outlined how the research would be used to reach policy-makers. However, we often found that we (or the project workers) had to explain who policy-makers were and what policy was. In reflecting on these encounters we felt that it was not always obvious to young people why it was in their interests to care about policy and policy-making. In the group discussions with those who participated in the research it also became apparent that young people, even if they were aware of policy, they did not know specifically what might be wrong with it, or how it could be better.

However, not all participants were disinterested in politics and policy-making. Some did express their frustration and anger towards policy-makers. For example, we asked one group what they would say if they had 10 minutes with the Prime Minister in order to make him understand their situation and what the government could do to help.

“I think they just need to hear it from like our point of view, because they will think that like it’s us being lazy...but then people who do actually try and get a job like they are struggling because there is like barriers that you just cannot get through. So I think just like sitting down and explaining to them what the barriers are and see if they can do something more” (Young female)

The comment points to young people’s awareness of the political discourses (highlighted in section 3.2); that policy is based on the assumption that individuals do not want to work and that there is a ‘poverty of aspiration’. The participant feels that she is seen as lazy as she cannot find work. However, she does not feel that politicians necessarily understand the barriers and difficulties that young people face in the labour market.

However, young people who were interested in politics and policy-making could find themselves in a situation where their voices were not being heard. The voting age was mentioned by some young people, who felt that those aged under 18 years were not listened to as they could not vote.

“I don’t know because like, I don’t care about the politics myself, the young people that do, they’re like sixteen and they’re not allowed to vote, and no-one really listens to what they have to say, so it doesn’t really matter. Like, what they’re saying matters...basically they have a say but no-one listens” (Young female)

Some of the participants also demonstrated a lack of confidence in their own knowledge and understanding of the political system, which would potentially hold them back in terms of voting or taking up other opportunities to have their voices heard.

3. Discussion and reflections

This section offers discussion and reflection on: (1) aspirations and the capacity to aspire; (2) substantial freedoms for participation; and (3) methodological reflections.

4.1 Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

As Baillergeau and Duyvendak (2013) outline, aspiration has to do with how individuals frame a desirable future, and what they regard as being a 'good life'. It can be viewed as an 'internal capability' as it develops with the support of the surrounding environment (Nussbaum, 2000) with aspirations derived from, grounded in and shaped by larger cultural norms and the interactions of social life (Appadurai, 2004).

The findings have demonstrated that the young people who participated in the research had aspirations and ambitions towards achieving certain outcomes in their lives, framing a desirable future, beyond dreams, expectations and educational/occupational prospects. There is evidence from the findings that (some) young people value more than just money and being in a job, want to do stuff they are passionate about. As such there was no evidence of a 'poverty of aspiration', a notion which has underpinned much of the recent political rhetoric surrounding reforms to the welfare system in the UK. The young people often identified people in their lives that they wanted to emulate because of their work ethic and achievements. However, the findings highlight the constraints to young people's capability to aspire and draw attention to the facts that the capacity to aspire is unevenly distributed in society (Appadurai, 2004).

While aspirations may be present, they may not be clearly expressed, and hard to identify amongst the 'white noise' of the frustration felt by the young people about the difficulties they face in finding work. What is also apparent from the findings is that the degree of freedom young people have in formulating a desirable future can be quite limited. For example, young people's aspirations may be very narrow because of a lack of understanding of the labour market and the opportunities within it. Aspirations are grounded in suggestions from immediate surroundings and experiences. As such young people may only aspire to work in jobs that people they know are working in, or in jobs that they have encountered as service users for example. Indeed others have found that young people gain a lot of knowledge about work from their parents; part time work experiences; and school (Levine & Hoffner, 2006). However, we should be careful not to undermine the importance and value to the young people themselves of wanting to follow in the footsteps of inspirational people in their lives.

The programmes that the young people engage with provide a mechanism through which young people's capability to aspire can be supported and developed. However, these programmes operate in the context of the constraints in the labour market and the demands placed on them by funders to achieve certain programme outcomes (Hollywood *et al.*, 2012; Egdell & Graham, 2014; Egdell & McQuaid, 2014; Egdell *et al.*, 2015). There is

evidence of adaptive preference formation (Nussbaum, 2000) as young people turn their expectations downwards because of the challenges they observe in the labour market to them achieving the future which they desire. For example they may feel pressured into accepting any job rather than pursuing further training and/or waiting until there is an opportunity more aligned to their aspirations. Young people's expectations are less in line with an ideal future as they often have no option but to focus on the short term needs of earning money and getting work experience. So in terms of policy outcomes a young person would be entering a positive destination but the Capability Approach highlights that the transition to work is not always positive if one takes into account young people's aspirations, and the values they attach to outcomes (Bartelheimer *et al.*, 2012; Vero *et al.*, 2012). Other research has also suggested that while young people may express strong desires to find work, have a home and family etc. they may be constrained by the opportunity structures available to them. As such young people may value paid work but not the type of work; and they may not conceive of their futures beyond their current circumstances (Bryant & Ellard, 2015). However, young people do build on positive triggers in the formation of their aspirations e.g. being inspired by a youth worker that they met growing up. Young people may feel that they have few opportunities available to them, but as Bryant and Ellard (2015) argue, while they might not have choice, they may still have hope of living a better life.

4.2 Substantial freedoms of participation

The research has focused on two strands of participation: (1) Young people's participation in employment support programmes and the labour market; and (2) young people's participation in policy-making processes/politics.

The findings show that young people's participation in employment support programmes can be argued to be transformative. The programmes are supporting young people to be able to participate in the labour market. They are providing young people with labour market skills that they may lack (e.g. helping them with CVs, giving them work experience, raising their awareness of opportunities, motivating them to job search) and helping to develop their aspirations further. As such in some ways the programmes are equipping the young people with the conversion factors needed to have voice and choice in the labour market. There is also evidence of young people having voice and choice in the programmes, for example in determining the types of activities that they will undertake, and therefore their voices could be said to be taken seriously in this arena.

However, the extent to which employment support programme participation is transformative and gives young people voice and choice is limited by wider socio-economic structures. The participants felt excluded from the labour market due to forces beyond their control in terms of employers not giving them a chance to gain experience. While young people may attach value to certain job outcomes they do not necessarily have the choices available to them to exercise their voice. They may feel the pull to accept any job rather than fulfilling their aspirations. The constraints of funders in terms of prescribed outcomes may also mean that young people's choices in the programmes are also limited.

In terms of young people's participation in policy-making processes/politics there was diversity of experiences and opinions. For some, it was not obvious to them why it is in their interests to care about these issues. This could be shaped by a perception that politicians are out of touch with young people and do not understand what it is like looking for work. The lack of voice and opportunity that young people feel in the labour market could also result in them not feeling that they have or are able to have a stake in policy-making processes. The age of the participants could also be an important factor to consider. Many were under the age of 18 and therefore could not vote in elections, and some may not have been old enough to vote in the Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014 when the voting age was lowered to 16 years. There was however, generally wide youth engagement with the Scottish Independence Referendum. Indeed, an equivalent of 89% of all 16-17 year olds resident in Scotland were registered to vote in the referendum (McInnes *et al.*, 2014). However, the momentum generated by the referendum among young people may have declined over time, especially for those aged under 18 years who cannot usually have a direct stake in influencing politics through voting. A lack of confidence in their own knowledge and understanding of the political system also held some back from engaging.

4.3 Research methods: a methodological reflection

In this section we engage in some methodological reflection. In particular we pay attention to the different relationships negotiated during the research process. *"Although participatory research may grant a view on another world, it is fraught with a range of relationships that require negotiation and which necessitate constant self-reflection"* (McCartan *et al.*, 2012: 1).

4.3.1 Selection bias

Throughout the photovoice project we have been well aware of the issue of selection bias. In recruiting participants for the project we approached 20 employment support providers to act as gatekeepers. However, many of these approaches were not successful. Reasons included: providers not responding to emails or follow up telephone messages; organisations not feeling that the project was right for the group that they were working with; and concerns about potential difficulties in motivating their service users to take part in the research, when the provider was already having difficulty in motivating them to take part in their programmes. Even when providers either presented information to their service users on our behalf, or invited us to present information to their service users in person, the majority of young people approached did not want to participate. As such the resulting nine participants are not necessarily representative of group of interest.

We are also aware that going through gatekeepers has limitations in terms of potential selection bias. Young people not engaged in programmes will not be reached, and as outlined by others (Higgins *et al.*, 2007; Tyldum, 2011) it can be the case that young people can feel they have to participate almost as a 'favour' to the gatekeeper – especially if they are in a bounded environment of an employment support programme. Access was also

dependent on project timetables, with organisations only being able to help with the project if they were running a programme at the time. However, it is recognised that young people can be a hard-to-reach group, and that going through gatekeeper groups is an effective way to reach them. The gatekeeper groups also provided a trusted and familiar location from which young people could participate. Participants were also made aware throughout that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any point without giving a reason (indeed five participants did withdraw from the project).

We would argue that the success of the project has hinged on good relationships with gatekeepers. Gatekeepers who engaged in the research felt that the project presented an interesting opportunity for their service users to express their opinions, often citing that this was a group whose views were not often sought. Some also felt that it provided an opportunity for the young people to: explore photography taking and the meaning of photographs beyond 'selfies'; to gain skills in terms of being able to take an aesthetically pleasing photograph; and to express themselves creatively. The gatekeepers played an important role in motivating the young people to take part. It was often the case that the young people did not want to declare interest in front of their peers when we presented the project to them, but did so once we had left. The gatekeepers were also helpful in enabling us to keep in touch with the young people as they had day-to-day contact.

4.3.2 Problem definition

The issue of 'problem definition' became increasingly important during the research process, as we became aware that questions need to be asked about the extent of this being participant driven research as it is still a researcher initiated project.

During the 'Introduction to photovoice workshop' (stage 2) it was often difficult to get a balance between directing the task and not imposing all the questions from the start. The participants often asked for suggestions and examples of the types of photographs to take. In order to help participants, we asked 'warm up' questions during the workshop about their experiences of looking for work. We also asked questions about where the young people wanted to be in the future and what they wanted to be doing in one year's time. From the answers to these questions we, alongside the photography students who supported us in delivering the workshop, did discuss with the participants the kind of photographs they could take to represent their aspirations.

However, throughout it was stressed that participants could interpret the theme in any way they wished and take any photographs they liked²⁹. Some participants stuck to the theme rigidly, taking photographs of the venue of the employment support programme that they

²⁹ Of course some limitations were placed on them in order to ensure their safety. For example, we outlined that: no photo is worth any personal danger; don't go anywhere you wouldn't usually go, or do anything you wouldn't usually do; always ask people before you take their photograph first, even if this means missing the perfect shot; and do not take photographs of children (i.e. those aged under 16 years).

attended; photographs of themselves conducting job search activities; and images that represented the job they wanted. Others generated content that was maybe less directly 'relevant' to the research questions but provided insights into their day to day lives, e.g. where they go, who with, what they see. For example one participant commented that their photographs were: *"stuff that I've seen, stuff that I think is funny"* (Young male). Some became very enthusiastic about taking photographs and experimenting with photography in terms of composition and lighting, and sought to produce a series of aesthetically pleasing images. For example some participants took photographs showing where they went with their friends and became very enthusiastic about taking 'good' and interesting photographs. **Photograph 5** an example of this.



Photograph 5

The lack of a 'right' answer was sometimes frustrating for participants, who often felt that they had got it wrong or taken 'bad' photos. One participant for example commented when seeing the photographs taken by the other participants that more generally documented their day to day lives that:

"I think I got told to do the wrong thing...I could have done other things...everyone's been doing random stuff but I was told...that you had to take pictures of where you were and where you wanted to be and that kind of thing" (Young male)

However, usually after some discussion they were happier with their choices and felt more reassured of their relevance to the research question. While on the face of it a photograph might have little or no relevance to the research question, when we discussed when and why they took the photograph, the relevance became more apparent.

"You would think it's like a bad photo but when you properly sit down and think about it and look at it then it makes more sense" (Young female)

The photographs also provided a useful icebreaker tool in the group discussions, even if they were not directly relevant to the research questions.

4.3.3 Giving voice to the research participants

We have also reflected on the extent to which the photovoice method has given voice to participants and as such as generated richer and more insightful data.

We would raise some questions about the benefits to data generated compared with more traditional methods such as focus groups employed earlier in the SoCIeTY project (Egdell & Graham, 2014). Would for example these insights have been gleaned through conducting interviews or focus groups that employed a semi structured questionnaire and allowed participants to lead the session? In terms of the 'added value' of the method, the choices of subject in the photographs provided clues about what is important to participants. Also the photographs acted as useful icebreakers with the participants and did lead to interesting discussions that might not have necessarily arisen in the standard focus group approach. In terms of making a contribution to the participants, taking part in the photovoice project was seen as fun by some, but a burden by others although they did not necessarily withdraw from the research. However, of those who participated, some had put a lot of thought into their photographs, e.g. in terms of composition. For example one participant noted that:

"To get that one [photograph] I had about 50 or so different copies with all different angles and stuff" (Young female).

In the main however, it is difficult to say to what extent the photovoice method was empowering and gave voice to the young people who participated. We were aware that we were asking participants to make a big effort in order to make their voice heard (i.e. taking a photograph a day on a topic that they would not necessarily be taking photographs about in the course of normal events). We did hope that using smartphones and an online platform would make the photovoice project more accessible. However, this was not a platform already used by the participants. In the future we would suggest, with due consideration of the associated ethical issues, exploring ways in which to tap into technologies/media that young people are already engaging with, and the photographs they are already taking as part of their engagement with this technology/media.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion this chapter has, through reporting the findings of a photovoice project, explored the inequality and disadvantage faced by young people in the labour market, young people's participation and capability for voice, and young people's aspirations and the capacity to aspire. The chapter has drawn attention to the limitations to young people's capability to work, i.e. their real freedom to choose a job or activity they have reason to value (Bifulco, 2012). The young people felt that they were disadvantaged in the labour

market. They did not feel that school was equipping them with the skills needed in the labour market, and they felt that they were not being 'given a chance' by employers.

The young people all wanted to find work and most had a specific job in mind. Some in particular valued more than just money and being in employment, wanting to work in a job that they were passionate about. But while young people may be able to define to some extent what a 'good life' is, they may not be able to achieve these aspirations, which may also be quite narrow. Young people may have to adapt their preferences and may feel that they are unable to contest and alter their situation and to understand desirable alternatives (Nussbaum, 2000; Appadurai, 2004; Walker, 2006).

The findings show that there are arenas where young people's voices are being taken seriously. In employment support programmes their views and aspirations are listened to – although wider socio-economic constraints may limit the extent to which they can shape the programmes. However, there are other arenas where young people do not necessarily feel that their voices are being taken seriously. There have been concerns over youth political disengagement and apathy for several decades, although research has shown that the problem is the disconnection and alienation of young people from the political process (Sloam, 2007; Harris *et al.*, 2010; Henn & Foard 2011, 2013; Checkoway, 2011; Sloam, 2012; Geniets, 2010). The findings presented in this chapter highlight the diversity of experiences and opinions. For some, it is not obvious to them why they should take an interest. A lack of confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the political system could also be fuelling this disinterest. Other young people may be more engaged but may feel that their voices and opinions are not being sought or heard.

In summary, the chapter has highlighted the importance of taking young people's voices seriously, as they draw attention to important issues in their lives not necessarily being addressed by policy. There are some spaces where young people's voices are being heard, but others where young people do not feel confident to express their views and aspirations for their lives.

5. Policy relevant implications

The research findings have some important policy relevant implications to consider:

- How can schools better prepare young people for the workplace? Young people do not feel that they are being given the opportunity to develop the right skills. Youth employment support providers do fill the gap in providing young people with jobseeking skills etc. but questions need to be raised about whether this is just a 'sticking plaster', and whether these gaps should be addressed earlier and more systematically.
- How can we encourage employers to give young people a chance? The young people's narratives highlight their perception of not being 'given a chance' by employers, and the self-fulfilling situation this creates. There are programmes to give young people a first

opportunity in the labour market, but the issue of not being 'given a chance' by employers is still a key barrier that young people perceive in the labour market.

- Young people's experiences of finding work draw attention to the importance of considering and addressing the role of the socio-economic and political constraints of opportunities in young people's transition into work.
- In terms of developing young people's voices in the policy-making process, how can we engage young people with processes that they feel removed from and that they do not expect will change anything? How can we give young people the confidence to engage?
- Is it possible to give voice to disengaged young people on their own terms? Even though we took a participatory approach in our research it was still a researcher initiated process and it is not necessarily a research process that all young people find interesting. Are there alternative modes of participation, using technologies for example that young people are more engaged with? Will policy-makers listen to young people who are expressing their views on their own terms/using alternative modes of participation?

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CASE STUDY SPAIN: Young People's Voices: The Use of Participatory Video in Quart de Poblet, Valencia

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1. Executive Summary

Using the theoretical framework of the Capability Approach (Sen 1990, 2009) and the participatory video as a method (Milne et al, 2013) to articulate the voice of young people, this report offers an analysis of the multiple dimensions faces of disadvantage, participation and aspiration from the point of view of young people.

To conduct our fieldwork, we have chosen the municipality of Quart de Poblet located near to Valencia in Spain, which despite having a relatively developed industrial area has been also severely affected by the financial crisis. As already defined in WP3 and WP4, there is a growing notion of disadvantage that is not directly related to wealth but rather to well-being. Additionally, youth as a collective are also referred to as a disadvantaged group. As a consequence of the economic recession, young people (16-24 years old) in Spain are either facing long term unemployment or employment with short term and low paid contracts.

As a result of the previous work undertaken for the Society project, we chose to work with the help of the municipality of Quart de Poblet and, specifically, with the Casas de Juventud (Youth Houses) that are spaces provided by the municipality to defined groups of young people with the previous agreement of doing public activities and events of general interest. With their support we conducted a series of workshops with young people who were involved in activities developed by the municipality. The workshops dealt with a technical part (the use of video and the art of making a short film) and a theoretical-analytical one (the understanding of youth, participation, social exclusion, economy, education, etc.). This second area was worked through participatory techniques (word cloud, post its, discussions, etc.) and with the support of social media. During the project, we developed a blog and Facebook account specific for the group in order to continue the dialogue after the specific workshops (see Introduction and Research Design).

As developed in the Research Design section, this participatory research is centered on the use of participatory video as a method that empowers young people and offers them a tool and space for their voices to be heard. The aim is to contrast the perspectives of young people regarding youth polices. Put in other words, to contrast top down approaches with bottom up ones. The final result of the process has been the production of three short movies (max. 3 minutes each) in which the voices and

perspectives about issues relevant for young people are put across. The topics that the three groups of young people decided to develop were: migration, education and participation.

Based on the final interviews with them and discussions, the Research Findings and Discussion sections conclude that for the participants it has been a fruitful experience because they felt that they have never been heard by policy makers and that generally the current policies affecting youth were not relevant for the participants. A general critique coming from the young people is that policies are too often focused on economics and employment and neglect other areas that are equally relevant (as illustrated by the topics expressed in their movies). Therefore, one main conclusion of the report is that their aspirations are currently not addressed by policy and that they demand a more participative and inclusive way of developing policies. Furthermore, the fact of feeling that they are not heard or included leads to a non-action from the young people that is too often miss-understood as passivity. The report concludes that rather than being passive, young people are disillusioned about the lack of participation in politics and they exhibit a low trust on politicians. A remedy for this is, as noted in previous reports from the Society project, is to change the Information basis for the judgment of justice (IBJJ) (Sen, 2001).

At the bottom up level it seems that young people do not trust politicians and rely at most on youth professionals. Therefore, there is a gap between the needs of young people and the policy design. Youth professionals are the bridge in between them but these professionals are also feel powerless and without voice in the policy design process. For this reason, there is a general disillusionment caused by the lack of relationship between policy and real needs.

Taking seriously the perspective of young people and understanding young people as a disadvantaged collective, has been helpful for proposing innovative policies tackling exclusion as the cause of a lack of participation as noted in the Policy Relevant Implications 'section. The capability to aspire is, as it is shown in the case study, deeply affected by the continuous neglect that young people receive. Despite their silenced voices in the policy making process, we have found that young people exhibit a high level of resilience thanks to their participation and engagement at the local level. The Houses of Youth or Cases de Joventut, are the symbol of participation and the space provided by the municipality where young people can develop ideas and manage projects. The series of workshops and continuous dialogue with the group of young people that has constituted the research process gave us the opportunity to disentangle the role of these spaces as a place where young people could expand their aspirations.

This report, though, concludes that young people's answers outlined a general feeling of being individually trapped and unable to change current educational and labour inequalities, aspects which were based on political contingencies and European mandates (Navarro, 2013). Referring to the austerity measures applied since the beginning of the economic recession, and the combination of it with a conservative

government (Popular Party – Partido Popular), young people felt that inequalities were growing.

In a final stage of our participatory research we conducted a round table debate where young people exhibited their videos and the municipality, NGOs and the University were invited. The assistance from the young people was lower than expected, however the debate was dynamic and the gap between policy making and assistance professionals and young people was again pronounced. Additionally, during the discussions it was noted the impossibility from a top down perspective to engage with the young people and the necessity of having them on board since the beginning. In relation to the municipality procedures, the team congratulated them for the effectiveness of the Casas de Juventud engaging young people, but also alerted them to the need to coordinate their work under the existent Consejo de la Juventud (Council of Youth) (CJE, 2014). Additionally, in current politics youth is dealt with as an individual topic, but the transversal character of it was shown during the work with the group of young people. Their needs and aspirations tackled other areas beyond the department of youth (environment, social mobility, education), therefore the team recommended the inclusion of a young person in each of the existing councils.

In order to involve a bigger amount of young people, the dissemination will take place again but in a different scenario. On the 6th and 7th of June the Alternative Fair of the city of Valencia will take place in an open space. There we have booked a tent in which the videos will be shown and the young people can talk with the assistants.

To conclude, the report on disadvantaged young people in Quart de Poblet exhibits a series of limitations in current policies. First, there is a need to enlarge the concept of disadvantage to include youth as a collective. Second, the developments of policies need to change the IBBJ and include other voices (young people but also youth workers). Third, the municipality needs to keep encouraging participative projects for young people but these should be coordinated under the umbrella of the Youth Council. Fifth, young people are a collective and therefore their representation should not be limited to the area of youth but rather should be transversal and taken into account in all the other areas. Sixth, the lack of resources and the employment focused policies do not represent the needs and aspirations of young people. And seventh, all these limitations generate a feeling of powerless that increase young people's vulnerability. Consequently, the report recommends the incorporation of bottom-up processes of participation in policy making in order to enhance the capability to aspire of young people in a climate of job scarcity, growing inequalities, cuts in social services and youth emigration.

2. Introduction

The rapid and abrupt changes that are occurring in Spain have as a main feature the mark of austerity. Cuts in social budgets are continuous since the beginning of the economic recession and at the present moment; the budget targeting youth is practically non-existent. The municipality where the participatory research was undertaken is Quart de Poblet. Quart de Poblet has 26 000 inhabitants (INE, 2015) and is located 10Km from Valencia and connected via subway. 5.5% of the population is from an immigrant background; most of them from North Africa and South America (INE, 2015). Additionally, the city grew from 10 000 inhabitants to 20 000 in the 1960s as a consequence of national migration and the industrial development of the Valencian region (INE, 2015).



The municipality is a novelty in the Valencian community for two reasons. First, because the city hall is governed by the socialist party (whilst the conservatives govern at the State and Community level); and second, because it has one out of the 33 Youth Councils in the Valencian Community (out of 600 municipalities). This organisation acts as an interlocutor between the administration and young people but does not have a definitive role in Quart de Poblet because the municipality already has a separate area (Quart Jove) focused on reinforcing the active role of youth in the society. In a national scenario where the main mechanisms of young people's participation in policy making represented by the figure of the Youth Councils is being severely attacked, the national Youth Council (the Spanish Youth Council) which had more than 30 years of history is being dismantled (with a legal order to cease its activity as a response to the Law of Rationalization of the Public Sector "Ley de Racionalización del Sector Público"), where the youth councils have had a budget cut of more than 50% and have been shut down in most of the regions, Quart de Poblet is the exception to the rule. Additionally to have a separate building only focused on youth affairs, the city hall provides the administrative and physical space of Casas de Juventud (Houses of Youth) for young people to be self-organized in terms of workshops, activities and other participatory acts. A Casa de Juventud or Casa de Joventut (Youth House) is a space provided by the municipality to the young people in order to carry out activities and events. This type of spaces spread in 1984 and according to González (1992:26) "a youth house is an infrastructure framed in a territory or district that has a public nature and offers public services that aim to enable young people to participate".

In fact, in Quart de Poblet there are 3 house of youth (CJ L'Amagatall, CJ La Cebollera, CJ Barranquet), and spaces open for communitarian use (Espai de Creacio Jove) and six associations (in which the Youth Council is one out of other five) concerned on providing a structural platform where youth policies, activities and alliances are debated and designed.

Other reasons for choosing Quart de Poblet is that since the beginning the municipality showed interest and willingness to collaborate. Having participated in other EU projects

related with media and participation, they were eager to be part again of another project concerning this time on youth and using video as a tool to grasp the voices of youth.

Having defined the municipality where the research took place, it is relevant to focus on the methods. The participatory action research process has been articulated aiming to use the video as a tool to channel the views of young people in Quart de Poblet. The following report analyses the role played by the participatory video as a tool as well as the challenges that it has presented during the process. Additionally, it provides a greater insight into young people's views about policies and institutions. The three story boards finally developed, accompanied with the fourth video developed by us made of interviews with them (see Table 2 and 3), are an example of the wide range of topics that concern them, the level of awareness and information about the current problematic and the disassociation that they feel regarding national institutions and public messages that portrayed youth as passive and apathetic children only seeking joy and leisure.

In conclusion, by adopting the Capability Approach as a grounding analytical framework for exploring the aspirations, disadvantage and participation of young people and using the participatory video as a tool, the report defines social inequality as intrinsically multidimensional and youth as a vulnerable group. Albeit the participants involved in this research agreed that different levels of disadvantage were existent, they agreed that a young person living in Spain now is facing multiple disadvantages and therefore should be considered as a group in risk of exclusion. The rest of the report focuses on:

- Identifying the research process and design and the level of participation of the young people in current policy making processes
- Outlining youngsters aspirations, needs and preferences
- Evaluating at the municipal level the relation between youth disadvantage and policy making processes
- Presenting the participatory video as a tool to articulate young people's aspirations and start a dialogue from the bottom up

3. Research questions and research design

Since the beginning the research was designed on the principles of participatory action research and with a line of work that favoured a bottom-up approach in which the topics concerning young people were defined through constant dialogue and debate with a strong use of social media. In the research design it can be seen a glimpse of the workshop schedule, topics debated and outputs done during the process (table 1).

Table 1 – List of meetings and content

Workshop	Topics worked	Dissemination and dialogue
6 and 7 th of February	<p>Team presentation</p> <p>Video participatory as a tool</p> <p>Pitch (story board)</p> <p>Presentation of the videos</p> <p>Debate and final brainstorming of themes concerning young people</p>	<p>Creation of an email list, general WhatsApp group, and 3 specific ones for each group, Facebook account and blog</p>
12 th of February	<p>Each group presents a first draft story board based on one of the topics of the brainstorming</p> <p>Debate</p> <p>Discussion about the National Youth Policy Strategy Plan 2020 (El Plan de Acción de la Estrategia de Juventud 2020) and board discussion of the meaning of participation</p>	<p>Via blog the discussion is summarized and further links provided</p> <p>Via Facebook the videos of the previous session are uploaded as well as other videos with a social but also technical content where comments from the groups are welcomed</p>
19 th of February	<p>Further work with the story board</p> <p>Wrapping up of the meaning of participation and introduction to the topic of social exclusion</p> <p>Each of the groups is invited to define it and post it on Facebook</p>	<p>Blog and Facebook as platforms for communication</p>
27 th of February	<p>The story boards are taking shape</p> <p>The discussion about social exclusion is extended to the difference between social exclusion and social inclusion and the role of volunteers. The participants make use of personal stories</p>	<p>Facebook and blog, the participants are invited to send pictures of Quart and those are posted in the blog.</p>
5 th of March	<p>Proposal of making a fourth video that grasps the discussions and ideas put during the sessions</p>	<p>Via email a guideline is distributed and via blog examples of other video-interviews are presented</p>
13 th of	<p>Presentation of the videos and debate about</p>	<p>Results posted on</p>

March	how the topics of the videos (entrepreneurship, education and volunteerism) can be sharpened Presentation of the fourth video based on private recordings of five of the participants	Facebook
21 st of March	Internal presentation of the videos and a full day's work in order to edit and finalize these	Blog and Facebook
26 th of March	Meeting with youth workers and city hall personnel to arrange public screening and roundtable debate	Dates arranged with the youngsters through WhatsApp

The research design has been continuously revised and changed always keeping in mind to have a continuous communication with the group of youngsters and to adapt to the results of the participatory action research. Based on the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), the research was approached as an ongoing organizational learning process, a research approach that emphasizes co-learning, participation and organizational transformation. (Greenwood et al, 1993).

The use of participatory video as a mechanism to grasp the voices of young people and compare this with the analysis done on youth policies has been a central element during the initial phase of the project and one of the elements that encourage the municipality, but also the young people, to participate.

Regarding the selection of participants, the research aimed to grasp a wide spectrum of youth in order to present multiple voices. Thanks to a close collaboration with the professional youth worker at the municipal youth area (Quart Jove) who introduced the project to different youth workers and youngsters, three groups of young people were eventually selected:

Table 2 – List of participants

	Affiliation	Gender	Level of studies
Raquel	Quart Jove	Female	VET
Paula	Quart Jove	Female	University
Susana	Quart Jove	Female	VET
Pau	Quart Jove	Male	Secondary education

Marcos	Quart Jove	Male	VET
Monica	Cremant/Matadero	Female	University
Silvia	Cremant/Matadero	Female	University
Julian	Cremant/Matadero	Male	University
Lourdes	Esplai	Female	Secondary education
Patricio	Esplai	Male	Secondary education
Cristiano	Esplai	Male	Secondary education

As noted above, the process of the research was focused on the use of participatory video (PV) as a mechanism to articulate the voice and aspirations of young people. Whilst this tool is still an emerging one, its use is being fast spread in developing countries. However, the potentiality of it can be also brought to any region and area where there are a collective or group whose voice is not being heard/represented. In fact, as it is defined by one of agencies promoting its use:

“Participatory video is a tool for positive social change, it is a means of empowerment for the marginalised and it is a process that encourages individuals and communities to take control of their destinies” (Insightshare, 2006).

During the first workshops, 30 minutes were used to get to know the level of engagement with social media and the frequency of use. Due to the disparity in age, those with a regular access to email or Twitter were a minority and the group agreed that WhatsApp and Facebook were the most used channels. Additionally, the research team created a blog that was used as a research diary but also as a place for the participants to come back after the discussions and read them. The weekly meetings were systematically split into three parts. A first part in which the blog posts and the new Facebook content were debated (usually videos related with the subject of youth but also some videos focused more on the technical or put as an example of good social-mobilizer video). A second part in which the groups presented their storyboards and the difficulties or challenges to put down their ideas into up to eight pictograms, and a third part in which one of the goals of the National Youth Policy Strategy Plan 2020 was presented and then opened to discussion. The National Youth Policy Strategy Plan 2020 was selected because it summarizes the strategy of the government regarding youth for the following years. Structured in six axis, 14 goals and 211 actions the axis correspond to 1. Education and Skills. 2. Employment and Entrepreneurship. 3. Housing. 4. Health and Care. 5. Participation, Voluntarism, Inclusion

and Equality. 6. Institutional Cooperation. Axis 1, 2, 3 and 5 were debated with the group of youngsters.

The threefold design of time for summary and update, time for their own work and time for presenting the national plan and get reactions, was done in order to tackle the main question from a bottom-up approach. During the whole procedure, the concept of capability was at the centre.

“The capability approach to a person’s advantage is concerned with evaluating it in terms of his or her actual ability to achieve various valuable functionings as a part of living. The corresponding approach to social advantage –for aggregative appraisal as well as for the choice of institutions and policy – takes the set of individual capabilities as constituting an indispensable and central part of the relevant informational base of such evaluation” (Sen 1993: 30).

A focus on the space of freedoms and genuine opportunities that align with the methodology used, also focused on enabling each of them to articulate experiences and aspirations.

The first question was accompanied by a brainstorming (see picture below) which helped to visualize the vast range of areas of concern and to (in the following meetings) compare it with the economist view of youth policies presented in the national plan.



Due to the double challenge of participatory research using participatory video, the team was supported by the assistance of two persons with wide expertise on the use of video. The first one was a direct collaborator of the city hall who runs video workshops for young people as well as being responsible for the institutional film making. The second person,

less involved in the technical side and more on the participatory video research had a vast expertise on the use of video as a tool to foster social change.

Based on their guidance each group was provided with a hand held camera to use during the project. Out of the three groups, one was already familiar with the use of the video cameras (the group of Cremant) , however for the other two was the first time that they were involved in creating a video and for the three of them that the video was a tool for social research.

The process, debate and decisions involved within each group to decide the topic and message of the video was the central output of this project. Due to the fact that the groups mostly knew each other beforehand (besides the group of Quart Jove), the research design maintained the order of the groups based on previous affiliation and planned to ask for final short movies from each of the groups.

The meetings were planned to take place at the public space of Matadero, and to take graphic evidence of it (pictures, video), during those, as well as notes to be used for the writing of the blog.

The blog is open to the public <https://www.tumblr.com/blog/societyquart>, as well as the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/societyquart/>. Therefore, since the start it was designed to ask for the consent from the participants to post pictures and personal information in social channels. The idea of having open groups was to favour later access as well as to promote that the content would be easily shared. Whilst at an initial stage, the idea was that the participants would also take some authorship in the creation of the blog, it did not happen. Therefore, the role of the blog was more of summarizing discussions and Facebook and WhatsApp were the channels used for debate (through the formulation of open questions see post of 19th of February in which social exclusion is being debated, or through posting videos, articles, audios, interviews or their own story boards).

Whilst the project ended with three groups at an initial phase four groups showed their commitment and enthusiasm to be participants. However, the fourth group that was formed by four final year high-school students, did not participate because they could not attend the meetings due to exams and other commitments. The fact of using social media has, though, allowed engaging them at some level and two of the members of the group have responded to some of the debates through via Facebook or WhatsApp.

Due to the fact that the final short movies was reduced from four to three (because the last group could not take active part into the project), the team decided to modify the research design and include the making of a fourth video edited by the research team, and including the participants as protagonists, that would be a compile the themes talked about and debated during the sessions.

The initial designed of this video was based on the following script:

Table 3 – Video interview script. Part 1

Hi my name is _____, and I live _____ years.

At the moment I'm doing _____ and I would then _____.

When I was told about the project, I thought Society _____, then after the first workshop _____ And now that is already ending I think _____.

When I hear about policy _____, and as a young person I am interested in _____.

In general, the aspirations of the Spanish youth are _____.

I would like _____, and in the future hopefully _____. However, _____.

In my opinion participation is _____. Although, some times _____.

That could be solved _____.

From my understanding, social innovation is _____, an example would be _____.

Social exclusion or disadvantage is something that _____.

To prevent or alleviate this situation could _____.

During the process of participatory video and workshops I think I _____.

Choosing the theme of the video has been _____, we finally decided _____, and is interesting because _____.

In summary, _____.

The script was tested and four participants provided their responses by recording themselves at different locations. A video was edited and the findings discussed. Finally, the group decided that a better output could be obtained by recording the voices of the group with better equipment, without a predetermined script and in a more stable and homogenous surrounding. Therefore, the team agreed to meet on a Saturday (21st of March) to record those who were willing (mainly all the other participants besides two) in the space of Matadero.

The guidance for the second round of video-interviews was circulated beforehand and was the following one:

Table4 – Video interview script. Part 2

Video interview (Part Two)

1. Presentation
2. Being part of the group Society Quart
 - a. Quart's Society
 - b. What is it that attracted you to the project? (What encouraged you to participate?)
 - c. Have you done something similar before?
 - d. Why?
3. Topics
 - a. How about the most important work done in recent months?
 - b. You think that initiatives like this contribute to how you see yourself within the space and society around you?
 - c. Why?
 - d. From your perspective, what are the most important things a girl needs?
 - e. You think those things are provided here in Quart?
4. Youth
 - a. How will you describe a regular young person from Quart de Poblet?
 - b. Do you think being young in Quart is easier or more difficult when compared to other municipalities, why?
 - c. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the phrase "young people today ..."
 - d. You identify with images of youth that are projected in the media?
 - e. What do you think of the phrase "Youth is the future."
 - f. What Quart could do better for young people?
 - g. And what does the municipality do well?
5. Conclusion
 - a. Who would you like to see the videos that you have done? Why?
 - b. The project is finished, what is your reaction?
 - c. If you were the coordinator of the project, what things will you do to attract more young people to participate?
 - d. Would you recommend to participate to someone else?
 - e. Do you imagine using in the future the information and techniques that you learned in the project?

The capability approach as an analytical framework provided the ground for analysis. It attaches great importance to personal choice but at the same time it considers choices in relation to the resources, norms and institutional arrangements available for the person. Consequently, it can account for interpersonal variations among participants (different perspectives on aspirations or understanding of participation) but at the same time it puts

those variations in relation to socio-environmental factors (Robeyns, 2000; Crocker, 1992). This is of central importance to Sen:

“Investigations of equality –theoretical as well as practical- that proceed with the assumption of antecedent uniformity (including the presumption that ‘all men are created equal’) thus miss out on a major aspect of the problem. Human diversity is no secondary complication (to be ignored, or to be introduced ‘later on’); it is a fundamental aspect of our interest in equality” (Sen 1992: xi).

The following section, Research Findings, analyse the outputs of the project under the lenses of the capability approach.

4. Research Findings

The process of the participatory action research using video has involved 11 youngsters, organized into three groups, with whom we have weekly met during the period of eight weeks and have had almost daily contact via social media. The main findings of the project are obtained from two different sources:

- Secondary material:
 - Videos, documents, news, and other types of info shared by the research team but also by the participants and posted in one of the social media platforms used during Society (WhatsApp, Facebook or blog).
- Primary material:
 - Three final short movies prepared by each participant group
 - A video-interview with each participant
 - Notes from the discussions of the National Youth Policy Strategy Plan 2020 and, particularly about the axis of 1. Education and Skills. 2. Employment and Entrepreneurship. 3. Housing and 5. Participation, voluntarism, Inclusion.

Henceforth, the research findings presented in this report correspond to an analysis of the primary and secondary material produced during the time of the project. A link to the videos is foreseen to be available after the public screening in the municipality, and for further reference in the section.

4.1. Participation

Participation, in terms of fostering the engagement of youth in the community, is one of the main tasks of the department of youth in the municipality of Quart. Due to the fact that the young people that participated in the research were selected via this channel the majority of them were actively involved in participative processes and practices. However, the features and conditions under that participation were different and so it had a result on the ways of work and organization of each group.

In general terms, the group of youngsters affiliated with youth houses (casa de Joventut – Cremant and Esplai) were used to taking decisions using participatory process and to be open to contestation, meanwhile the other group of youngsters (Quart Jove) participated in offering support to the platform for youth provided by the municipality in a limited time frame and under an internship agreement rather than by social commitment. The difference between these two levels of participation (committed and permanent vs. accidental and temporal), may have had a possible influence in the dynamics of group work within each team and on the ability to give weight to all the voices of the group. However, although the group of Quart Jove was the less unified in terms of engaging in a common topic, the fact that their members did not know each other from before (as opposed to the other two groups) also could have favoured this difference.

Having noted the participation within the groups, the discussions about participative processes was started by asking each group to make a list of places where one could participate in Quart and for the reasons why one participates and why one does not. The groups elaborated an extensive list of municipal groups as well as sportive and district ones that demonstrates that they are aware and informed of their options and the response to the reasons are:

Table 5. Participation

I participate because....	I do not participate because....
Motivation	I am misinformed
It is necessary	I am unmotivated
It is fun	I am lazy
It makes me a better person	I am pessimistic
It allows me to know other people and other opinions	I do not get money for it
I feel obliged	I do not have time

Focusing on the first column, the reasons for participation show how participation arises from an individual concern but also from a civil commitment and obligation to give to others in the community. Using the words of Paula,

“To participate is a must if one wants to be part of the society, if we don’t do it then we will all be as lambs that cannot take any decision and end up accepting everything that others tell us (...) even if sometimes the bosses of the country do not want to hear us as they should we have to keep participating” (Video interview, 1st round)

It is that view that their actions are discomforting the established order something that is shared also by other youngsters. A discomfort that shows on one hand, the will of youngsters for participation but, on the other one, their distrust of being heard:

“to give our opinion and to be part of the decision making process is very important, the voice of the people ... even though sometimes is difficult because they don’t want

that and they could do more things, such as debates, to hear us” (Susana, video interview 1st round)

The pessimism that is expressed in the second column as a reason for not participating is what exhibits Julian:

“I like (to participate) because it is to be part of something that you feel and you feel identified doing it. I want to improve things. However, there are days I don’t want to participate in anything because I think that is not going to be useful” (Julian, video interview 1st round)

A pessimism that is also mixed with issues of fear to share your opinion as it is noted by Pau when he refers to the legislative changes (Ley Mordaza, December 2014) that impose severe economic sanctions in order to limit demonstrations in some spaces, the act of occupying financial entities or empty buildings as a sign of protest and the use of recordings during the same amongst others. According to him, things change all the time and also at work, where he does not feel he can freely participate and ask for a raise because he fears to be fired “our voice is worth nothing” (Pau, 19th of February).

Finally, the fact that participation does not offer a measurable reward is also that, although does not stop the group of youngsters of Society to participate in several activities, they say that many other people think of them as naive for working for free. During the first workshop, the group of Cremant did a short film based on the value of being a volunteer and how an envelope saying thank you was rewarding enough for the volunteer. Similarly, the group of Esplai did the first video about the value of intergenerational learning and has chosen the topic of participation and voluntarism and the value of the activities done by their centre (Esplai) as the main theme for their final video. This video ends with a series of people defining in one word what Esplai is for them and a list of adjectives such as solidarity, team work, dream, voice, fun are central.

Looking at the primary document of youth strategies the point of participation is included in axis 5. Participation, voluntarism, Inclusion and it has the following actions to promote it:

- Promote voluntary activity for young people, particularly those related to Information and Technology.
- Fight against social exclusion of the most disadvantaged young people.
- Fight against violence of any kind of discrimination.
- Promote equality

The presentation of the following actions within the group generated a debate in two different ways. On one hand, the young people raised the question of why axis 5 had so many themes in itself and the difficulty that it caused to differentiate and value each of the topics. On the other hand, the concern was with the concrete actions that the plan designed to foster participation, with a strong emphasis on Information and Technology. From the three groups of youngsters, only one group (Cremant) works directly with media and technology as the main tool in their workshops. However, it was agreed by all of them that technology per se cannot be an end but rather a way to obtain something else. A big

concern for many of the youngsters was the use of information and the little objectivity and diversity of opinions in the media and the unclear message in the objectives of what kind of information was meant to be produced. During the workshops the statement that “the shows that one sees in TV do not represent me” (Silvia, 13th of March) was a reiterative topic. Additionally, Valencia is a bilingual region and during the workshops it was felt the discontent on the use of the national language (Spanish) in almost the entirety of news and shows televised, privileging then, certain voices at the expense of others.

Therefore, the conclusion is that we have a juxtaposed situation. On one hand, young people feel themselves active and participate in some areas (youth clubs, sports,), but on the other hand the participation required from them at a policy level is restricted to an area in which they feel suspicious for being manipulative (information), not truthful in looking for diversity of opinions and henceforth, not being a truly transformative participation.

4.2. Inequality and disadvantage

Quart de Poblet is a municipality that had a big expansion in the last two decades due to its location near the city of Valencia. In between Quart and another municipality (Aldaia) and having the motorway and the industrial area as a divisor line, is located a “mancomunidad”(commonwealth of municipalities) that hosts almost 7000 people, Barrio del Cristo. This district, that now aims to be autonomous, is ruled by the two city halls since its origin in the 1940s with the migration from other parts of Spain to Valencia. Since the 1990s this district is considered a priority area for social action (BAP) but still has higher levels of unemployment, criminality and lower levels of education than the hosting municipalities.

The group of youngsters do not have any relation with other young people or associations working in this area. Only one (Pablo) relates an activity that he did with other young people from the district and his narrative is full of examples where the youngsters did not care about public furniture or public authority. The disassociation between youngsters is an image of the disassociation between the associations of Quart de Poblet with the associations of El Barrio del Cristo which is also reinforced because El Barrio has many facilities that include also a school and a high-school.

Coming back to the primary document of youth strategies and to axis 5 which included Inclusion with the following actions:

- Fight against social exclusion of the most disadvantaged young people.
- Fight against violence of any kind of discrimination.
- Promote equality

It is evident that in Quart de Poblet there are not concrete actions in which young people already engaged in associations can be actors to help other young people to fight against social exclusion.

In the workshop carried out about social exclusion and how they were identifying reasons and cases, the general answer was that social exclusion was not a single phenomenon but the consequence of a cumulative series of actions (or lack of actions) that let a person to be left from participating in the society. Issues of race, gender, religion or deficiencies were raised as factors that increase the risk of social exclusion. According to Jordi:

“The society has been built by people (to my understanding) that do not have any disability; they have done everything for people fully able. Everything goes too fast and requires too many things from each of us to be adapted to it. The task is then to support the people who are less able and to offer support and respect and help them when they need it to give them a role for not making they feel useless. This is not the jungle, the Darwin selection was replaced by the human selection. We have the capacity to decide who adapts and who survives. We need to respect each other and do not leave anyone out of the boat to improve the situation of young people in risk of social exclusion” (Jordi, Facebook debate 26th of February)

This approach puts at the foreground the idea of having a society in which civic values are favoured against competitiveness. The understanding of the need to change the informational basis which favours the economy for one that favours the well-being of individuals was also put forward by Monica. During the debate of the topic to select for their short video, she invited the group to read a book written by Mario Vargas Llosa “The civilization of the entertainment - La civilización del espectáculo” in which she summarized using a sentence from the book “a world in which the first place is occupied by the entertainment and frivolity proliferates raging in the minds of people” (Vargas Llosa 2012:26).

According to Monica, the book captures well how we live in this world of exhibition where the values and care for the life or situation of others is not truly relevant, but rather in most of the cases only follows to attract audience and entertainment. The example was followed by the group giving examples of people who were in need after an accident and other people were taking pictures before approaching to offer help.

Taking vulnerability from a personal story where she takes the voice of the youth, Susana talks about social exclusion and vulnerable youth in terms of not being represented. She puts it in these words:

“When I think about vulnerable youth, I think in all of us that are in total disagreement with the things that are being done politically and are affecting us in a short and long term, and mainly I think in that our critiques are not being heard. Individually we cannot do anything that improves this situation ‘the union makes the strength’, I think that we need to put from ourselves but support each other” (Susana, Facebook debate 20th of February)

The idea of having the voice of youth united was discussed and everyone agreed that was better to represent the youth as a group in order to grasp the specific needs of this collective.

In conclusion, there is an agreed perception of discrimination for the fact of being young in terms of lack of representation and the consequent demand of being treated as a group. Social exclusion is seen as a cumulative process that affects them as young people but at

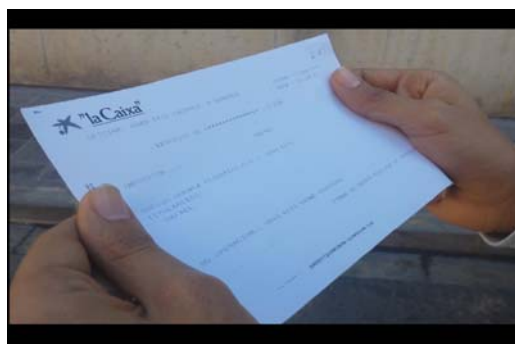
the same time affects other collectives to a greater extent. Although the group of youngsters did not share to have a direct relation with youngsters in a more vulnerable situation, they feel that as young people are vulnerable because they are not able to push their views or ideas forward. Alongside the critiques there is the demand of changing the values that rule the current society and to move from a capitalist frivolity to a social humanity.

4.3. Aspirations

The capacity to aspire of the group of young people analysed is intrinsically linked with the socio-economic situation. The lack of job opportunities and the continuous change in the educational curricula favouring a privatization of the same are main pillars. In fact, among the three groups two of the final short movies were dealing with these topics.

The short movie done by the group from Quart Jove titled “Adiós España” tells us the story of a young person who after finishing his degree decides to open a business as a way to create himself a job. The video shows how the youngster goes to the entrepreneurship office and gets informed but the financial help that he may potentially receive is insufficient to rent the business space. The following clips are the packing of a suitcase and the leaving on a plane. Then, the movie stops and asks if that is the story that we went to tell to future generations and with a change of more cheerful music shows some clips of young people that has remained in the country and has opened a business. It ends with a petition for help to change the future of the young people in Spain and to make possible to fulfil their aspirations.

Video 1. Quart Jove – Clips from the first part.



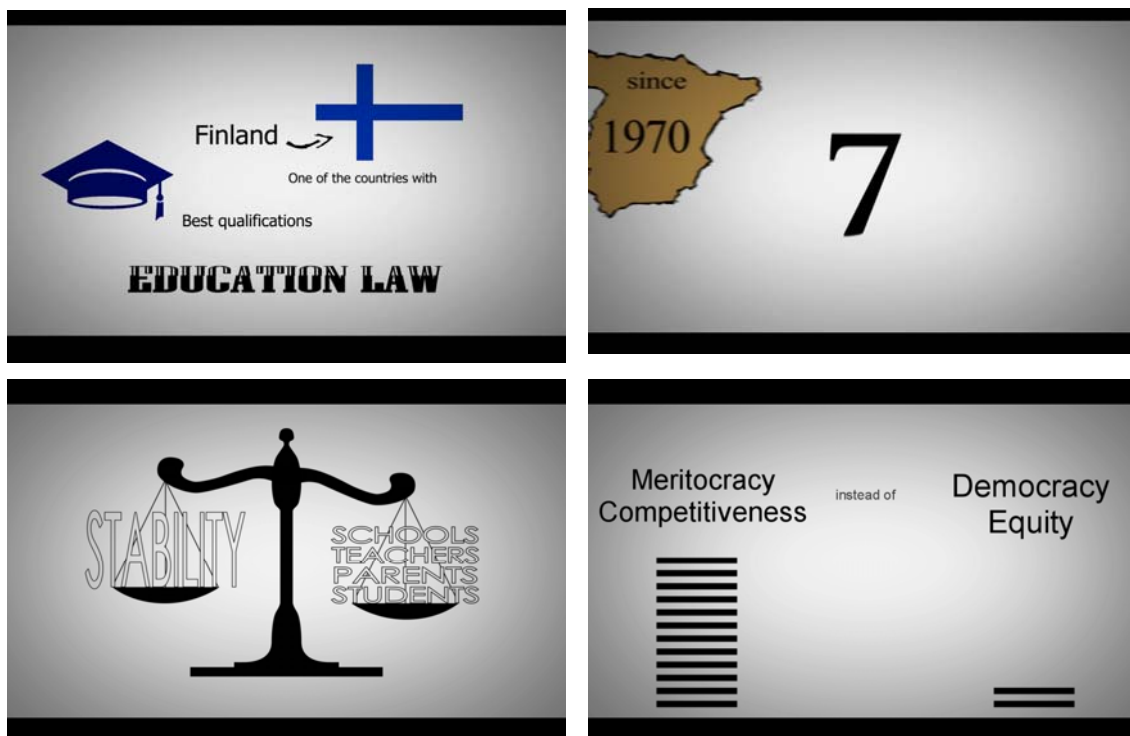
The other short movie tackles the diminished capacity to aspire of young people from a different perspective. It is not the financial crisis as in the first movie, but the lack of participation, social consensus and wrong informational basis that affect the aspirations of youngsters. This movie was developed by the group of Esplai.

Video 2. Esplai – Some clips.



The short movie developed by Cremant tells in an animated way the numerous legislative changes that the educational system has had since Spain became a democracy (seven in 36 years). Additionally, it raises the critique of the lack of participation and consultation with the main stakeholders in the development of these educational laws, and the privilege of strong ideological content in a continuously reduced and marginalized public educational system. The instability of education in the hands of ideological wars and the constant ruling of two main political parties is what the video criticizes; putting young people in an uncertain scenario to plan their future, remarks their limited space of freedoms.

Video 3. Cremant – Some clips



To conclude, the aspirations of young people are, put in the words of Marcos, “to finish their studies and to leave this corrupted country” (Video interview, 1st round)

4.4. Social innovation

Social innovation is a term that at the municipality of Quart de Poblet takes form through the autonomous work of the Houses of Youth (Casas de Juventud). The young people involved in those are able to present proposals and to organize workshops in the spaces destined for them. This bottom-up and participatory process creates spaces for youngsters to express their views and to put forward their needs. An example of the workshops done during the time of research are a workshop of Lego-robotics, a contest of micro-stories on love and heartbreak followed with public presentation, a pyjama night at one of the spaces, or an encounter to play old computer games.

Asking the group of youngsters about social innovation a general answer was that they did not know the meaning of the term. They guessed that it should be something around the lines that Raquel defined:

“Social innovation should have to do with something that regenerates the society in a new way because the one that we have does not work. An example could be to educate people in politics because in a moment all of us we will vote and we should know what to do for our rights” (video interview 1st round)

The idea of regenerating society or changing the principles that rule the current one appears again as central in the debate. The youngsters' voices plays, in this aspect, a vital role to structure how the regeneration should be done and the messages that the three final videos put forward are three examples of what three aspects should be taken into account.

In conclusion, as it emerged during the project, despite of the work done by the municipality with the Houses of Youth, there is a general feeling of policy as not being innovative. The continuous focus on employment does not reflect the totality of the aspirations and concerns of young people. As it emerged during the workshops, young people ask for a higher degree of participation and for spaces in which their opinions can be put forward.

4.5. Other key issues

The participatory research process using video has provided a fruitful discussion in which the three final short movies (plus the video-interview one done by us) are only a part of the outputs. The elaboration of each story board has been accompanied by debate and discussions of how to reduce to eight or six pictograms the many issues that were concerning them. Motivated by the fact that the videos will have a public screening in Quart and possibly in the European Parliament, the youngsters have aimed to dismantle the idea of young people "passive, looking to party and being at home" (Cristiano, video interview 2nd round) for one in which they are empowered members of the society looking for a positive social change.

A glimpse of the content of the videos follows:

Group	Title	Keywords	Aim
Quart Jove	Adiós España	Youth opportunities Entrepreneurship Migration	"To show that young people have ideas but not enough opportunities and that there is something to be done about it" (Marcos, 12 th of February)
Cremant	Education	Legal instability Politics Education Conservative government Religion Segregation	"They change the law all the time as they want, and ask for more money or for more years, and we cannot do anything about it" (Monica, 12 th of February)

		Social Justice	
Esplai	Esplai	Participation Voluntarism Young people Monitors Free time	“The good and the bad things of being a volunteer and the role of it” (Lourdes, 25 th of February)

In sum, the young people that have participated in the project are deeply affected by the lack of opportunities faced by them, their friends and their families, which seem to be increasing in the last few years in parallel with the economic crisis. However, the participants exhibit a high level of resilience and willingness to change the direction of this trend. A proof of this is the production of the videos. The first one, despite of showing a difficult reality where young people are forced to migrate due to the lack of opportunities in Spain ends up with a series of images where one can see young people that have started a business. The video ends with a question directed to the public: do you help us to change it? (Video Quart Jove). Similarly, the video showing the educational laws and the political fight behind these changes aims to provoke the viewer and to act against the use of education as a political tool. The final video developed by Esplai is positive from the beginning and aims to show how participation has a value in itself and to give voice to the work of volunteers.

5. Discussion, review and reflection: Analytical dimensions

Taking seriously the perspective of young people about their needs, aspirations and barriers that impede the realization of those can be helpful for the development of more effective policies. As shown in our project, this hardly happens and there is a general feeling of being disconnected between young people and youth policies. As a result of the analytical framework of the CA we agree that individual aspirations should be put at the centre as a priority on the design and implementation of policies. Consequently, social innovation is not to do things differently but rather, to do actions that take this perspective into account.

5.1.1. Social inequalities

The young people involved in the research are diverse in terms of age but quite similar in terms of background. Most of them are the ones with the highest educational level in their families (despite most of them being in secondary education) and share a common lack of perspective about their future. Even in the case of being high academic achievers (one of the participants was given an award for being a top student in their high-school) they do not think this is going to be helpful in finding a job in Spain. There is a common understanding that Spain is not able to provide opportunities for young people and that

they will need to emigrate. In conclusion, they all seemed very negative about their future and in some cases they even refused to talk about aspirations. Their capability to aspire is deeply affected by the experienced inequalities and those are more persistent among women or migrants. One of the participants comes from North Africa and expresses that his possibilities are less than for other young people. Although they are able to articulate these critiques, they are not willing to express those to the municipality because they feel that little can be done to solve it. Many of the young people feel that the Houses of Youth are the places to share and discuss values that are missing in daily politics. The work done by Esplai and the Casas de Juventud was put forward in every workshop. At the final presentation, the public also shared positive views about being part of these Casas de Juventud and how the values learnt there helped them to achieve their aspirations in the future. However, regarding social inequalities a concern about the Casas de Juventud was shared. There is little representation of minority groups in the Casas (the participant with a migrant background was not part of that) and those who were not part of it did not feel they were sufficiently informed or invited to assist.

5.1.2. Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

The continuous dialogue with the participants and the final videos represent the powerless feeling shared among young people in Spain but also their level of resilience. Their answers and approaches to politics highlighted that they were sceptical but that they were participants of the daily life in their municipality. During the workshops the young people presented personal stories but also family ones in which disengagement, deprivation and lack of opportunities were recurrent topics. At the micro level the project can show how disadvantage is multifaceted and that lack of participation is a big element originating it. In other words, a general exclusion of young people from participating in the design and implementation of public policies has a negative impact on young people aspirations. It is evident that, despite being engaged in municipal activities these are insufficient. As a consequence, young people's aspirations are adapted to the rule from the top. The participants show their concern when thinking about their future because they feel unable to change structural practices (i.e. corruption, political instability, discrimination) that affect directly their opportunities.

5.1.3. Freedom of participation

Our participatory research tried to involve diverse young people. The municipality selected the participants based on an initial relation with a Casa de Juventud or as beneficiaries of an internship in the youth department of the city hall. From the start this type of selection conditioned the understanding of participation that young people had based on the participation in formal activities promoted by the municipality. However, the freedoms of participation in an informal way and the different degrees of participation were issues not so generally understood among participants. The ideas of democratic processes were, among the group of youngsters, too often linked to processes coming from the municipality. This had an influence on the idea of self-

organization and the perceived power that they had as young people, of changing or transforming their daily realities. Although in the workshops the young people discussed and criticized the vision of youth as passive consumers, they felt that they were lacking the resources to confront that statement. To sum up, the young people claimed to change the service-user participation for one in which they were active part of the way participation was organized. The Casas de Juventud are an example that participation is transformative and that it can be used as an end in itself. Young people participating in these processes of participation (Casas de Juventud) were able to propose programs and projects within it that were addressing unmet needs.

5.1.4. Research Methods: A methodological reflection

The methodology adopted during the project had two basic pillars: the Participatory Action Research (PAR) and the use of Participatory Video (PV).

Aiming to gather the voices of the youth in order to define disadvantage, aspirations and the role of participation from a bottom-up approach, the methods selected demanded from the objects of research (the participants) to become subjects of research (researcher or co-researchers). As noted above in the research design a series of workshops were established and the young people were introduced to the techniques and aesthetics of video making. Parallel to this technical knowledge (offered by specialists), the team worked with the group on debates about issues and concerns in their daily lives. From those debates or continuous dialogues the participants decided which topics they would like to further explore and present through the use of video. Whilst the outcomes and process have been a success is it fair to recognize that the research has had also **limitations**. On one hand, the participants were not selected by the research team but rather by the municipality. Therefore the group of young people were, to a bigger or lesser extent, active agents in the municipality (through the Casas de Juventud or because they were doing an internship at the city hall). Therefore, even though the gender balance was satisfactory there were other balances that could have been better (migrant – national, level of education, geographical area of the city, etc.). On the other hand, at the beginning and due also to the fact that the recruitment was not directly done by us as a team, we had some power or person-reference issues. The young people felt more comfortable addressing their concerns or communicating their assistance not directly to us but rather to the youth worker or to the tutor of the Casa de Juventud. Whilst this second issue was lessened after some workshops and the first one through the debates and dissemination of different views of youth through our social media channels, one needs to acknowledge those two obstacles to the research. Additionally, another limitation of the use of PV was the different level of technical knowledge among the groups. One of the groups was experienced on the use of video and therefore their final video is of a higher technical quality. This difference provoked at first a sense of discouragement to the other groups that saw the video making process as a process to obtain a “nice movie”. However, through talks and debates it was understood that PV is not the same that video making because the final product is only

a tool to articulate the voice of traditionally silenced people, and the process of doing so is the most important part (InsightShare, 2006)

The **dissemination** of the results was planned to happen twice. The first viewing was meant to happen in an internal level (participants and municipality) and the second one a public one (round table and guests). However, due to the proximity to the elections and the possible political tensions, the viewing was limited to one and the date was changed in a short time notice. Whilst the team managed to make a combination of the two (people from the municipality with some guest speakers from NGO and University and guests), the short time notice of the change of dates caused that only few participants could attend. To the final event 30 people attended and the debate was dynamic and lively. On the 7th of June and as part of the Alternative Fair of Valencia, the videos will be again seen alongside a series of other video projects with a social perspective.

6. Conclusions

The use of video participation at the micro level in the municipality of Quart de Poblet has brought a series of conclusions. At a theoretical level, the use of the capability approach as a framework has helped to highlight and disentangle the multifaceted concept of disadvantage. Focusing on inequalities, aspirations and participation, the research has aimed to widen the perspective of vulnerable youth beyond the idea of poor young people.

From the empirical level the conclusions are that the weekly work done in form of workshops, discussions, social media interactions, video interviews and final video production by the participants, has brought voices and perspectives often not heard by policy makers. Whilst young people shared the idea that their opinions were invisible for the policy makers, they shared the resilience and enthusiasm for elaborating a short movie that could be shared and disseminated in different areas.

Contrarily to the top down perspective of employment as the single and biggest concern for young people, the participants shared a diverse list of areas and topics that were concerning them. Employment in itself did not represent a goal and the young people (especially those who were already in the job market) talked about insecurity and well-remunerated salaries. Insecurity was a permanent topic also when referring to their future and to their aspirations. The young people aspired to have a country in which insecurity would not be the norm and where politicians could be trusted. As the videos showed, there was a general feeling of mistrust to the political class. A bottom-up change was widely demanded and it would necessarily include a change on the level of participation. Similarly on the issue of participation and transparency, the meso level (social workers and youth workers) shared a willingness to be part of the design of youth policies and felt that, despite of leading many young people initiatives that were participative, it was something that they did as a municipality but that it had not a national support.

It is evident that young people would like to participate in the design and implementation of policies that directly affect them. The fact of being deprived of it, increases the climate of scepticism and mistrust towards top authorities as well as a general feeling of depression. Whilst at the municipality young people feel more active and included than at the national level, there is a gap between the need of the young people and the existing public policies that mostly focus on employment. For this reason, the young people that participated in the project did not feel safe referring to their future and downsize their expectations or centred those in migration as the only alternative.

Finally, from the methodological side the conclusion to be learnt is that the use of digital or innovative tools such as the participatory video are highly recommended to engage young people and to help them to articulate a powerful (in terms of visibility and content) discourse. During the process the team has learned about video technique but also about how using media beyond consumerism. The young people showed their concern and lack of representativeness when the TV was portraying the image of youth (party, reality shows or passive people staying at home until their mid-30s). The participatory video helped them to produce content that can challenge that vision.

7. Policy-relevant implications

The results of the project highlight a number of policy implications for local and national stakeholders. As a direct result of the understanding of youth as a vulnerable group facing multiple disadvantages, youth policy needs to **widen the informational basis**. In fact, a more comprehensive view of young people and their genuine opportunities is needed for the integration of these in the labour market and society in general and for enlarging their capacity to aspire.

A **mismatch between policy and needs** has been highlighted, with a general sense that the focus on employment and entrepreneurship is not sufficient to tackle young people's barriers.

Moreover, the young people discussed that the **employability** discourse hides an idea of **individual responsibility** in which they feel that they are failing.

As noted by the young people, this discourse is not realistic because it does not reveal the obstacles that a person has to carry out an idea or project (video Quart Jove).

Alongside the employability discourse the second pillar that has been signalled on the project is the austerity cuts and how the cuts on social services and educational bursaries affect again young people's aspirations and capabilities.

It is important then as a policy recommendation that **young people** are considered as a **vulnerable group**, that employment does not become the only area that youth policy targets and that there are real financial **funding** for assuring that young people can access or remain in education or to open a business. This can be done by avoiding that

educational fees are increasing and by reducing the payments to young entrepreneurs during the first years.

Finally an understanding of the **multiple faces of youth disadvantage** and the specific needs of young people demands that young people are treated as individuals (or group) that is transversal to many other areas and hence it needs to be represented in decision taking bodies.

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CASE STUDY ITALY: Youth Unemployment and Public Policies in Italy: The Cases of Two Disadvantaged Areas in Milan and Naples

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1. Executive Summary

In this report, adopting the Capability Approach as a basic analytical framework, we will challenge or confirm our notions, at the macro and meso levels, of disadvantage, participation and aspirations of young disadvantaged people at the grassroots level.

As already defined in previous chapters, the most disadvantaged among the youngsters have been defined as those young persons (19-24 years old) who are long term unemployed with low educational levels. Young women and immigrants seemed to be especially excluded by the labour market for a number of different reasons.

To conduct our fieldwork, we have chosen the two disadvantaged areas of Giambellino (Milan) and Scampia (Naples) where the unemployment rates are especially high³⁰ among the youngest population within the two urban areas.

As in part seen in previous reports, some overlapping problematic issues and some differences among the two case studies surfaced in reference to the implications of the economic crisis, the consequences of spread social inequalities, participation within the third sector associations and in policy making processes, future aspirations of the youngsters and the black market resilience.

This participatory research is especially focused on policies that have the aim to contrast unemployment and disadvantage at the national, local and urban level. At the local level, three specific policies seemed to be relevant for tackling youth unemployment: the *Youth Guarantee*, the apprenticeship' contracts and the employment support services.

As a result of the preliminary interviews with the stakeholders involved in the previous chapters, we decided to work with the help of the *Libera network – names and numbers against mafias*, an association supporting community empowerment projects, engaged in managing confiscated lands owned by mafias.

³⁰ ISTAT 2014.

With the support of social assistance professionals, we conducted focus groups with target youngsters. In a first stage, we involved association gatekeepers who have been part of the process for the composition and organization of the focus groups. The involved youngsters appeared to have experienced a relevant lack of opportunities in a series of dimensions (familial economic background, access to education, territorial origins, gender and age).

Their voices and perspectives have never been heard by policy makers and generally they did not benefit by the existing passive and active policies concerning unemployment. However, they appeared highly motivated in being involved in the association activities.

Their aspirations are currently not addressed by the relevant decision-makers. The youngsters aspire to achieve better job conditions. Furthermore, they generally seemed disillusioned and negative about their future. As highlighted in the previous reports, the youth voice is generally not echoed and their perspective does not count in the IBBJ (Information basis for the judgment of justice) construction policies.

The question we tried to answer in this report is to what extent at the micro level and in disadvantaged areas social policies and practices take seriously the perspectives and preferences of the vulnerable youth. However, also a number of other questions have been addressed, such as: to what extent do youngsters influence the policy making process; how do youngsters relate to the relevant institutions; how do they portray their aspirations; how this is linked to their familial background and their school experiences.

The disadvantaged youth has not been involved in policy-making and more generally in contributing to defining means to tackle poverty and inequality. In other words, a general exclusion of youth voices in influencing and shaping public policies aimed at tackling unemployment has been highlighted both in Lombardy (Milan) and Campania (Naples).

At the grassroots level it seems that there is a relevant gap between the needs of the youngsters and the existing public policies. These disadvantaged youth often need the mediation of gatekeepers in order to express their opinion on labour policies, but according to our interviewees this never happened within the existing trade unions or political parties. For this reason, the youngsters do not express their dissent and usually accept very precarious or voluntary jobs only to enter into the labour market.

Taking seriously the perspective of youngsters about their social needs, concerns and aspirations, can be helpful for more innovative policies tackling the youth exclusion. Their capability to aspire is deeply affected by the experienced inequalities. However, these youngsters appeared not willing to address their critiques to national and local stakeholders for reasons that will be discussed further in the report.

The research process gave us the opportunity to disentangle whether these young people could expand their aspirations. However, a general weakness of the available

opportunities for a more comprehensive understanding of the possibilities to enhance their present jobs has been highlighted.

Their answers outlined that they felt being individually trapped into educational and labour inequalities, disengagement, deprivation and poverty, aspects which already existed within their families.

In a final stage of our participatory research we tried to involve and motivate the interviewed youngsters, as part of the focus groups of the two case studies, with writing and photographic workshops. The aim has been to finalize the research findings collecting data for ethnographic purposes. The target was to have a more concrete understanding of the youngsters' aspirations in a way that was not mediated by stakeholders, gatekeepers or social assistance professionals.

This report on disadvantaged youth at the grassroots level in Italy highlighted a series of limitations of the existing public policies (definition, development and implementation). The lack of well-targeted policies, overlapping initiatives at the macro and meso levels, not sufficient financial resources to contrast youth unemployment, poor bottom-up processes of participation in policy making and a consequent low capability to aspire of the vulnerable youth in the two case studies have been highlighted by the interviewees. All these limitations are brought about by more complex factors, among them a general lack of job opportunities, the resilience of local mafias, a poor integration of young immigrants in the legal labour market, diminished economic resources for their families, poor educational opportunities, etc.

2. Introduction

This research is focused on two urban areas: Giambellino in Milan and Scampia in Naples, where the most disadvantaged people among the young population are concentrated³¹. In these areas, the level of inequalities and poverty is high, youth is socially excluded and not involved in policy making processes. As seen in the previous report, according to the local stakeholders³², in 2014 the youth unemployment rate in Scampia is 67% compared to 56.3% of Naples and in Lorenteggio-Giambellino is among the highest in Milan³³. However, in these areas there is already a significant number of public policies targeting the disadvantaged youth³⁴.

By adopting the Capability Approach as a grounding analytical framework, social inequality is defined as intrinsically multidimensional. Albeit the youngsters involved in this research agreed on a general definition of disadvantaged youth, they added a diverse range of other vulnerabilities. However, they appeared not fully aware of the

³¹ See the Wp3 and Wp4 reports.

³² Data quoted by third sector and Libera employees.

³³ According to the Zone 6 (Lorenteggio-Barona) Municipality is especially high the number of unemployed youngsters who receive the unemployment insurance originally allocated to their parents.

³⁴ See the Wp4 report.

consequences of a diffuse exclusion of a large number of young unemployed in shaping public policies.

Thus, this chapter:

- Identifies the level of involvement of the youngsters in the policy making process;
- Identifies youngsters aspirations and preferences, and their role in the delivery and development of existing and possibly new youth employment policies;
- Evaluates at the micro level the relevant existing employment youth policies in relation to disadvantage.

Lombardy and Campania have a different degree of economic development and distinct labour markets³⁵. On the one hand, before the 2008 economic crisis, the Lombardia's labour market grew more than elsewhere in Italy. For this reason, the region kept unemployment levels among the lowest in the country (Eures, 2014). Economic growth in the region has boosted employment in recent years. However, manpower units fell as a consequence of the ongoing economic stagnation. On the other hand, the labour market in Campania has been severely affected by the 2008's economic crisis. Employment has decreased and, in parallel, the number of people seeking a new work has risen. Therefore, the unemployment rate is one of the highest in Italy (Eures, 2014).

This participatory research is focused on policies that have the aim to contrast unemployment and disadvantage at the national, local and urban level. At the local level, three policies seemed relevant for tackling youth unemployment: the *Youth Guarantee*, the apprenticeship' contracts and the employment support services.

In this research a special reference is done to the *Youth Guarantee* (2014-2020), i.e. a long-term plan to tackle youth unemployment in Italy with the aim to favor fixed term contracts, auto-entrepreneurship (e.g. start-ups) and to contrast social exclusion in Southern Italian regions.

As a result of the interviews with the stakeholders involved in the research, we decided to focus on the *Libera network – names and numbers against mafias*. *Libera*, is an association aimed at community empowerment, founded in 1995, coordinating 1500 associations, groups, schools working to spread the notion of legality at the grassroots level. This NGO is especially engaged in managing confiscated lands owned by mafias, cultivating, producing and selling goods (e.g. wine, fruits and vegetables), organizing summer camps for youngsters in these lands, anti-usury and anti-corruption programs.

In the Milan case study, *Libera* did appear to be involved more in cultural than labour related activities. CD (Comunità del Giambellino), part of the *Libera* network, is a social assistance centre for youngsters and kids living in Giambellino, Lorenteggio and Barona. It is an education provider for disadvantaged youth and a facilitator for their entry in the

³⁵ See the Wp4 report.

labour market. CD especially promotes the youngsters rights of citizenship, enhancing the relationship with their peers and setting paths towards social inclusion.

In Naples, on the one hand, *Presidio Scampia* works on the former Nuvoletta-Polverino³⁶ lands, now owned by the Municipality; according to Daniela Minardi (Libera)³⁷, more than 700 youngsters, included unemployed and former detainees, have been involved in its activities in the last two years. On the other hand, the Scampia unemployed movement, founded in 2005, is gathering needs of unemployed people in the district where the public institutions are perceived as completely unaware of the black market resilience. Especially former detainees, involved in the BROS project that gave them some paid training opportunities³⁸, and youngsters with low level of education take part in the associations activities that appeared to be engaged in local demonstrations and social contestations too.

In Milan, we involved the youngsters more at risk of disadvantage and vulnerability which are those long-term unemployed (15-24 years old) with low levels of education, and young immigrants. This group is composed of 10 youngsters (3 Italians and 7 foreigners from Egypt, Tunisia, Eritrea, Romania, Moldavia) involved in the activities of CD (*Comunità del Giambellino*), a third sector' association, part of the *Libera network*. A special focus on foreign immigrants integration in the labour market is provided³⁹.

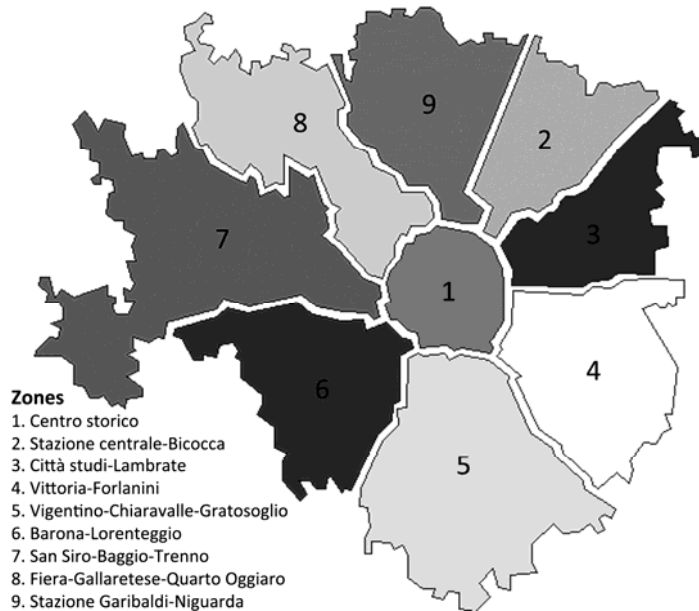
³⁶ Arrested local mafias criminals.

³⁷ Interview 15.

³⁸ See the Wp4 report. According to the involved stakeholders the BROS project gave a salary to long term unemployed for several years in Naples.

³⁹ The interviews and focus groups have been conducted between January and April 2015 in Milan. This is the full list of the interviewees: 1) Laura Anzideo, Libera coordinator; 2) Dario Anzani, social assistance professional. Focus group: 3) Kirolos Mikhaeil, 18 years, unemployed, Egyptian Copt national; 4) Salvatore Fiore, 21 years, apprenticeship contract; 5) Pasquale Salerno, 20 years, unemployed; 6) Cirpaci Codrut Elvis, 23 years, unemployed, Romanian national; 7) Rimoun Rezak, 22 years, unemployed, Egyptian national; 8) Timbur Judor, 20 years, precarious worker, Moldova national; 9) Sara Desiré Casu, 20 years, unemployed, Eritrean origins; 10) Claudio Fonte, 21 years, unemployed; 11) Mina, 21 years, precarious worker, Egyptian Copt national; 12) Mohamed, 20 years, unemployed, Tunisian national.

Figure I: Milan districts⁴⁰

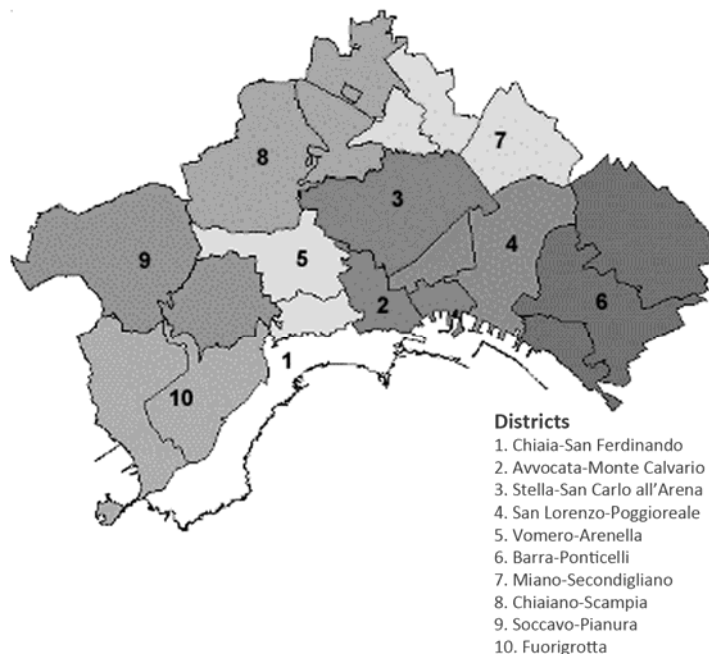


Disadvantaged youth in Naples are female and long-term young unemployed (15-24 years old) with low levels of education. The second group is composed of 10 Italian youngsters (5 men and 5 women) involved in the activities of *Presidio Libera Scampia* and *Scampia unemployed movement*, part of the *Libera* network – names and numbers against mafias. A special focus on women and their access to the labour market is provided⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Source: Milan Municipality.

⁴¹ The interviews and focus groups have been conducted between January and April 2015 in Naples. This is the full list of the interviewees: 13) Antonio D'Amore, Libera coordinator; 14) Simona Finamore, social assistance professional; 15) Daniela Minardi, Presidio Scampia; 16) Armando Arianiello, Scampia unemployed movement; 17) Stefano Stellino, 26 years, unemployed; 18) Raffaele Buonanno, 22 years, unemployed; 19) Emma Viola, 22 years, unemployed; 20) Noemi Izzo, 19 years, precarious worker; 21) Laura Chesi, 21 years, unemployed; 22) V., 29 years, former detainee, unemployed; 23) C., 21 years, unemployed; 24) Fabio, 27 years, unemployed; 25) A., 26 years, unemployed; 26) G., 27 years, precarious worker [identity of the interviewee in the possession of the author].

Figure II: Naples districts⁴²



We conducted focus groups⁴³ with target youngsters. In a first stage we involved association gatekeepers who have then been part of the process for the composition and organization of the focus groups. Representatives of the municipalities participated at some point at the definition of the preliminary meetings with the local associations (i.e., *Scampia* case study) but later on they did not take part in the participatory research. Initially we have found promising interest, especially on the level of involvement of the disadvantaged youth that take part in these associations' activities. However, a number of problematic issues had to be tackled in a later stage.

In the next sections we will try to disentangle to what extent do social policies and practices take the perspectives of disadvantaged young people seriously; to what extent do youngsters influence the policy making process; how do youngsters relate to the involved institutions; how do they portray their aspirations; how this is linked to their familial background and their school experiences.

In this report, we will compare, in reference to the two case studies, the definition of disadvantaged youth, given by the stakeholders at the macro and meso level, with the

⁴² Source: Naples Municipality.

⁴³ See the research methods.

definition provided at the grassroots level thanks to the discussions with the youngsters who participated in our focus groups. An understanding of the effectiveness of the existing public policies tackling youth exclusion will be provided. Moreover, youngsters' aspirations will be addressed in order to have a better understanding of participation and social innovation processes. In the next sections, we will discuss the methodological strategy we endorsed and the research findings in reference to the two case studies in order to understand to what extent inequalities affect the disadvantaged youth entry in the labour market and their future aspirations.

3. Research questions and research design

We approached gatekeepers and youngsters in order to disentangle to what extent, at the micro level and in disadvantaged areas, social policies and practices take seriously the perspectives of the vulnerable youth. In order to do so, we tried to challenge at the micro level the definition of disadvantaged youth provided at the macro and meso levels by the involved stakeholders. The NGO's coordinators who took part in the research generally agreed with the provided definition of disadvantaged youth; they appeared to be aware of the specific needs, background of the youngsters participating in the associations activities, their motivation to contribute to the association targets and their exclusion to the policy making process.

#[Libera]⁴⁴ The economic crisis enhanced social inequalities and the number of youngsters approached and involved in the local mafias in disadvantaged areas.

#[Libera]⁴⁵ A young person who adhered to Libera is directly engaged in promoting and participating with the aim to contrast corruption and black market activities.

#[Libera]⁴⁶ We have never been involved in the policy making process of the Youth Guarantee. However we are deeply concerned about the youngsters participation in our activities. For this reason we promoted a number of good practices such as co-working and co-housing projects inside the land previously owned by mafias or enhancing the labour market entry's opportunity for young unemployed women in specific fields (e.g. cooking and needlecraft), promoting trust between public institutions and civil society associations.

In the previous reports, the lack of well-targeted policies and sufficient financial resources dedicated to contrast youth unemployment at the macro and meso levels has been highlighted. Moreover, it has been shown that existing policies often appeared to overlap and were scarcely integrated at the national and regional levels. Finally, on the one hand, there is a mismatch (demand/supply) between available educational opportunities and the labour market for young generations, and on the other hand, the policies to subsidize young unemployed or the transition between two jobs are considered to be insufficient.

⁴⁴ Interviews 1 and 13.

⁴⁵ Interviews 1 and 13.

⁴⁶ Interviews 1 and 13.

Disadvantaged youth have been defined in reference to a lack of opportunities in a series of dimensions (familial economic background, access to education, territorial origins, gender and age). The stakeholders interviewed in the previous sections highlighted that the most disadvantaged amongst young generations are the long-term unemployed young people (the 15 to 24 years old ones) with low educational levels. If in Milan (Lombardy) an increasing number of young immigrants are amongst the most vulnerable, in Naples (Campania) the number of young women excluded from the job market is growing.

Existing policies and social programmes at the local level tackling vulnerable young people have been evaluated and examined. Especially, three policies seemed to be central for tackling youth unemployment (see Table I): the *Youth Guarantee*, the apprenticeship' contracts and the employment support services. Considering the differences between Milan and Naples, we tried to understand whether the three policies are innovative enough, with sufficient financial resources or suffering from a general mismatch (demand/supply) between available educational paths and the labour market opportunities for young generations.

Moreover, we tried to understand whether disadvantaged youth did have enough of a voice for participating and influencing public policies aimed at tackling unemployment. Nevertheless, as said in previous reports, in the policy making process of the *Youth Guarantee*, youth representatives have been heard through senior representatives within the unions, although they did not give a relevant contribution to the policy making process. A general exclusion of youth from influencing public policies aimed at tackling unemployment has been already highlighted both in Lombardy (Milan) and Campania (Naples) at the meso level.

Table I: Key policies to tackle youth employment at the local level

Policies	Laws	Description
Employment and training	Youth Guarantee	Beginning a long-term plan to tackle youth unemployment with the aim to favor fixed term contracts, auto-entrepreneurship and to contrast social exclusion in the Southern Italian regions. A consistent support for NEET is provided, especially through new educational trainings. It envisions a general reform of available employment support services and agencies, improving public and private actors' capability.
Employment and apprenticeship	Law 196/1997; Laws 69-76/2013; Law 78/2014	<i>Pacchetto Treu</i> introduced apprenticeship' contracts for young people (16-24 years old). <i>Decreto del Fare</i> , <i>Decreto Lavoro</i> and Poletti (Jobs Act) reactivated apprenticeship' contracts.
Employment, apprenticeship and	Youth Guarantee	The public employment support providers have the target to place the unemployed and promote

placamento		active work policies: work orientation and placement, favoring the match between work offers and demands and internships, etc
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3.1 Research Design

The research initiative and design have been in the hands of the researchers, as well as the responsibility of data analysis. We tried to avoid skepticism or dissent, outlying that the research could be anonymous, if necessary. We highlighted that all the youngsters involved in the focus groups should never feel judged or in examination being free to answers or not to all the questions. We asked to fill a sheet with their personal data (i.e. names, age, sex, school experience, time spent looking for a job, current employment if applicable, father, mother, brothers and sisters job and school achievements). However, a central role in potential change in social action remains in the hands of the grassroots associations.

This research has been based on the Capability Approach that provides the basis for analyzing and evaluating and initiating social innovation at the local level. In other words, it allows understanding the conditions under which individuals can live a life they have reason to value – through “living experiences” and change-oriented “capacity-building” (Chiappero-Martinetti, 2008).

For this reason, in the participatory research, on the one hand, we tried to challenge and redefine the notion of aspirations of young people and its link with inequalities and corrosive disadvantages⁴⁷. This attempt appeared poor or absent for the definition and construction of needs within the social support networks in the selected areas of Scampia and Giambellino, as well as in the ways responses are formulated by the youngsters and implemented by the civil society and public institutions. Our target has been to involve the vulnerable youth in several open discussions of concepts, participations, policies and change with the aim to use the results open for further elaboration among those stakeholders involved into social action and/or the reformulation of the local IBJJ.

On the other hand, we brought about a progressive involvement of the youngster participants in knowledge production. Discussing aspirations and their peers work experiences, we provided a chance for enhancing practices, strategies, opportunities and best practices among the involved actors.

4. Research findings

While conducting the focus groups with the youngsters, we tried to answer to the following question: to what extent and in what ways do social policies and practices take the perspectives of disadvantaged young people in an effective manner. We had the target to take into account their lived experiences and specific backgrounds,

⁴⁷ See Wp2 and Wp3 reports.

hearing the youngsters narratives, aspirations, notions of participation in reference with the two case studies we are focused in: Milano (Giambellino) and Naples (Scampia).

In sum, the youngsters were deeply affected by the inequalities faced by their families, often brought about by their low educational levels and long term unemployment. The inequalities seem to be increasing in the last few years in parallel with the economic crisis⁴⁸.

Their voice has not been heard by policy makers and generally they did not benefit by the existing passive and active policies concerning unemployment. However, they appeared highly motivated in being involved in these association activities and have been involved in its frequent meetings and initiatives. For these youngsters, this appeared the only available transformative way of participation or the only possibility to experience a change in their neighborhood.

4.1.1 Inequality and disadvantage

Case 1; group 1. The young unemployed Italians and immigrants, involved in the activities of *CD Giambellino* and who took part in the Milan focus group are between 18 and 23 years old⁴⁹. For their low level of education and their familial background they experienced a number of discriminations (e.g. no-paid jobs, without legal contracts, barriers in the labour market entry) in their attempt to find a job and they perceived to be excluded from the labour market. One of them⁵⁰ finished his vocational training school, the others concluded at least the lower secondary school in Italy⁵¹ or in their countries of origins before moving to Italy⁵². They⁵³ highlighted a strong mismatch between school and the labour market and they generally judged their educational path as not useful in finding a job. Elvis, Kirollos and Pasquale⁵⁴ considered important for their professional life the internship provided by their secondary schools.

The majority of these youngsters⁵⁵ did never work or have had very precarious jobs. Many of them⁵⁶ would accept any kind of job or not well paid precarious works in order to have some economic independence from their families. Kirollos⁵⁷, an Egyptian national (Christian Copt), has a short term traineeship contract. Salvatore⁵⁸ has had an

⁴⁸ Interviews 1 and 14.

⁴⁹ Interviews 3 to 12.

⁵⁰ Interview 3.

⁵¹ Interviews 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11.

⁵² Interviews 6, 7, 8, 12.

⁵³ Interviews 3 and 9.

⁵⁴ Interviews 3, 5 and 6.

⁵⁵ Interviews 19, 21 and 23.

⁵⁶ Interviews 3, 9 and 10.

⁵⁷ Interview 3.

⁵⁸ Interview 4.

apprenticeship contract; Pasquale, Cirpaci (Romanian national with German citizenship), Rimoun (Egyptian national), Sara (Italian national, second generation Eritrean)⁵⁹ are long term unemployed. Claudio has a 'job on call' contract⁶⁰; while Timbur, Moldova national, and Mina, Egyptian national (Christian Copt), have recently got long term contracts⁶¹.

They all grew up in lower income families. Their parents are all unemployed or with precarious contracts, with low educational levels. Salvatore and Pasquale⁶² fathers were employed at the moment of the research. However, Rimoun, Timbur, Sara and Claudio's⁶³ parents were unemployed, even if they did finish their lower secondary schools.

They all agreed⁶⁴ that for foreigners it is not problematic to find a job but their citizenship is detrimental for finding a good job. For some of them this is the major reason that forced their peers to leave the neighbourhood.

#: [Case 1; group 1]⁶⁵ If they have a job, foreigners are generally paid less than the Italians. If they are illegal immigrants, they often cannot get a job or a contract. Especially at the very beginning, when we arrived in Italy, we had to work very hard. In many cases we are excluded because they do not speak or study Italian.

Case 2; group 1. The young unemployed women, involved in the activities of *Presidio Scampia*, who took part in the first focus group of the Naples case study are between 19 and 26 years old⁶⁶. For their low level of education, their familial background and the fact of living in Scampia⁶⁷, they experienced a number of discriminations (e.g. no-paid jobs, barrier in the labour market entry, low level jobs opportunities) in looking for a job and were often excluded from the labour market. Three of them⁶⁸ finished their vocational training school, two concluded the primary school⁶⁹. Noemi⁷⁰ highlighted that to be involved in a traineeship programme organized by her school she should have paid monthly fees that she could not afford.

The majority of these young women⁷¹ did never work. Noemi⁷² had a short term contract in the last six months, while Laura⁷³ is involved in a training course financed

⁵⁹ Interview 5, 6 and 9.

⁶⁰ Precarious contract.

⁶¹ Interviews 10 and 12.

⁶² Interviews 4 and 5.

⁶³ Interview 5, 6, 9 and 10.

⁶⁴ Interviews 19 to 23.

⁶⁵ Interviews 3, 12 and 8.

⁶⁶ Interviews 19 to 23.

⁶⁷ Interview 19.

⁶⁸ Interviews 19 to 21.

⁶⁹ Interviews 22 and 23.

⁷⁰ Interview 10.

⁷¹ Interviews 19, 21 and 23.

⁷² Interview 20.

⁷³ Interview 21.

by the Campania Region; C.⁷⁴ took part in a first stage interview with the local employment support provider in order to accede to the *Youth Guarantee* but she has not been further contacted when we met her.

The five women grew up in lower income families. Their parents were all long term unemployed or with precarious contracts: they have been badly affected by the economic crisis, even if the disadvantage is perceived as an enduring condition. Noemi's brothers and sisters⁷⁵ did not attend secondary or vocational schools, only one of them was employed at the moment of the research. However, Laura's⁷⁶ brother and sister did finish their secondary schools and are working for public institutions or private companies; her father was in prison for long periods. The father of C.⁷⁷ is a former detainee involved in a regional program (BROS)⁷⁸ and working as a fruit seller, her mother is unemployed.

They all agreed⁷⁹ that being a woman is permanently detrimental for their possibility to find a job. For some of them this is the major reason that forced their peers to leave the neighbourhood.

#: [Case 2- Group 1]⁸⁰ The only reasonable perspective for a young women in this area is to be a housewife. This is due to a rooted discrimination to the woman integration in the labour market that is peculiar in our region. This is one of the major reasons that would push me to try to find a job in Northern Italian regions or abroad.

Case 2; group 2. The young unemployed men, involved in the activities of *GRIDAS*⁸¹ who took part in the second focus group of the Naples case study are between 23 and 29 years old. Three of them are former detainees⁸². For their low levels of education and their familial background they experienced a number of discriminations in looking for a job and were often excluded from the labour market. Two⁸³ of them finished their vocational training school, the others⁸⁴ concluded only their compulsory classes (up to 14 years old).

Those men have been all long term unemployed. A.⁸⁵ is working in the black market as smuggled cigarettes dealer; G.⁸⁶ is involved in a regional training program after a

⁷⁴ Interview 23.

⁷⁵ Interview 20.

⁷⁶ Interview 21.

⁷⁷ Interview 23.

⁷⁸ See the previous section.

⁷⁹ Interviews 19 to 23.

⁸⁰ Interviews 19, 20 and 21.

⁸¹ Interviews 17, 18 and 24, 25, 26.

⁸² Interviews 25 and 26.

⁸³ Interviews 17 and 24.

⁸⁴ Interviews 18, 25, 26.

⁸⁵ Interview 25.

⁸⁶ Interview 26.

period of detention. Stefano and Raffaele⁸⁷ are long term unemployed with previous experiences of traineeship.

They all grew up in lower income families and still live in their family home. Many of them⁸⁸ would accept any kind of job or not well paid precarious jobs in order to have some economic independence from their families. A. and G.⁸⁹ had long term unemployed fathers, brothers and sisters with precarious jobs. The parents of Stefano and Raffaele⁹⁰ have low educational levels and precarious contracts. Fabio⁹¹ is constantly supported by his family who motivate him to keep looking for a job.

They all appeared to be aware of being deeply affected by their familial background and their periods of detention. Moreover, they considered easier to be approached by criminals and smugglers for their needs. For their specific life experiences, they found additional barriers to find a decent job. They all pointed out a general mismatch between education and the entry in the labour market. However, they generally do not perceive their low educational level as a direct reason of disadvantage but consider their familial background as one of the most important reason of disadvantage

#: [Case 2; group 2]⁹² I did not find any alternative to social exclusion. Especially the school did not help me to approach the labour market; neither did my peers nor family.

#: [Case 2; group 2]⁹³ My previous experiences would allow me only to work with my father. However, I am motivated to be not dependent on my family.

#: [Case 2; group 2]⁹⁴ I think that if I went on going to school, this would have not helped me to find a better job.

4.1.2 Participation

Case 1; group 1⁹⁵. The young unemployed Italians and immigrants, involved in the activities of *CD Giambellino*, who took part in the Milan focus group never participated in policy making processes; they appeared to be not aware of the possibilities given by the *Youth Guarantee* or considered public policies contrasting unemployment as not effective; they did not consider employment support providers as a chance to get into the labour market or to find a better job.

#: [Case 1, group 1]⁹⁶ We do not know what the Social Card is and who is eligible. We do not have access to any subsidy or minimum income programs.

⁸⁷ Interviews 17 and 18.

⁸⁸ Interviews 24, 25 and 26.

⁸⁹ Interviews 25 and 26.

⁹⁰ Interviews 17 and 18.

⁹¹ Interview 24.

⁹² Interview 17.

⁹³ Interview 18.

⁹⁴ Interview 26.

⁹⁵ Interviews 3 to 12.

⁹⁶ Interviews 7, 8 and 12.

#: [Case 1, group 1]⁹⁷ I know about the Social Card because some of my friends with sons had applied to it. We had between six and eight months of subsidy after losing our job.

#: [Case 1, group 1]⁹⁸ We did not consider useful to go to the local employment support provider. The Youth Guarantee is not effective: we do not have access to a proper job after the first job interviews.

#: [Case 1, group 1]⁹⁹ I would not participate to the vocational training courses provided by the Municipality because I cannot pay the fees.

Some of them¹⁰⁰ appeared to have never approached trade unions or been aware of their functions. Salvatore subscribed for FIOM-CGIL (Federation of metalworkers employees); Pasquale's father referred to a local office of the trade union when he lost his job but he found no support; Sara added that not having a contract would not allow her to subscribe for a trade union.

They are involved in the activities of *CD Giambellino* because their families pushed them to participate to the association. Many of them had some support when they had problems at school or for legal advises. Tudor and Rimun¹⁰¹ been participating to the *CD Giambellino* activities since more than 10 years. Kirollos¹⁰² began to get involved in the association when he moved with his family to Italy; Mina¹⁰³ was been helped by the association to get a contract in a cooperative; Sara¹⁰⁴ said that knew about the association because is next to the centre; Claudio and Pasquale¹⁰⁵ were often involved in charity activities of the churches next to their homes.

Some of them had experienced a certain degree of consciousness of the resilience of local black markets in parallel with the enhanced economic crisis. For instance, Pasquale¹⁰⁶ argued that some of his relatives were forced to pay bribes to the local mafias. Elvis¹⁰⁷ added that he has been approached in many cases by local criminals with job offers.

Case 2; group 1. The young unemployed women¹⁰⁸, involved in the activities of *Presidio Scampia*, who took part in the first focus group of the Naples case study did never participate in policy making processes; they evaluated the *Youth Guarantee* as not effective, neither the other public policies contrasting unemployment; they did not

⁹⁷ Interviews 3, 5 and 10.

⁹⁸ Interviews 5, 9, 10 and 12.

⁹⁹ Interview 9.

¹⁰⁰ Interviews 9, 10 and 12.

¹⁰¹ Interviews 7 and 8.

¹⁰² Interview 3.

¹⁰³ Interview 12.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 9.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews 5 and 10.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 5.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 6.

¹⁰⁸ Interviews 19 to 23.

consider employment support providers as a chance to get into the labour market or to find a better job.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁰⁹ We never heard about the Social Card.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹¹⁰ The Youth Guarantee is not more than a website. I have been to the local employment support provider (Cpi) to take part in the selection but this did not help me to find a job.

They all live with their parents and refer to their families as the major provider of economic assistance. They outlined that only having good recommendations within the public institutions gives a chance to have a job. In addition, this is even the fastest solution to get access to subsidies.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹¹¹ Only my family is a reliable substitute when I do not have a job or money to survive. A cousin helped me to find a short term job in a call centre. I am engaged in preparing cakes for my neighbourhood and I sell them as member of a charity.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹¹² I am an educator in my church. I participated to summer camps organized by the priest as an educator.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹¹³ Some friends coming from poor families did not get public subsidies even if eligible.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹¹⁴ I took part in Stop Biocidio, a movement against pollution. I participated at the Festival della legalità (Legality Festival), organized by a priest¹¹⁵ who left the town after being threatened by the local mafias.

Three of them¹¹⁶ appeared to be aware of the functions of the trade unions because they have relatives who subscribed for local syndicates.

They are involved in the activities of *Presidio Scampia* because they took part in summer camps in confiscated lands owned by mafias. They had experienced the resilience of local black markets. This happened especially for the growing effects of the economic crisis. Emma and Noemi¹¹⁷ have been often approached by local drug sellers who offered them a job. C.¹¹⁸ has been asked to work with local criminals. They all outlined that if a person does not want to be involved in black market activities they know how to get rid from it.

¹⁰⁹ Interview 19, 20 and 21.

¹¹⁰ Interview 19, 20, 21. And 23

¹¹¹ Interview 21.

¹¹² Interview 20.

¹¹³ Interview 21.

¹¹⁴ Interview 23.

¹¹⁵ Aniello Maganiello.

¹¹⁶ Interviews 19, 20 and 21.

¹¹⁷ Interviews 20 and 21.

¹¹⁸ Interview 23.

Case 2; group 2. The young unemployed men, involved in the activities of *GRIDAS*¹¹⁹ who took part in the second focus group of the Naples case study did never participate in policy making processes; they appeared highly de-motivated, some of them gave up looking for a job or attending training courses. They do not consider the *Youth Guarantee* a good chance to get a job and they defined existing public policies contrasting unemployment as not effective; they did not consider employment support providers as a chance to enter into the labour market or to find a better job.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹²⁰ After a first job interview at Centro per l'impiego (Cpi), I never heard from them. The Youth Guarantee does not change our situation.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹²¹ I gave up looking for a job.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹²² I registered at public and private employment support providers when I was 15. But this strategy was not effective at all.

Some of them¹²³ do not trust trade unions. However, they all participated to demonstrations for labour rights in the previous six months. Stefano¹²⁴ participated to the movement against the construction of the Chiaiano incinerator. G.¹²⁵ has been involved in flash-mobs or empty building' occupations asking for labour rights.

A.¹²⁶ asks for the help of a religious NGO when he cannot provide enough food for his family. Fabio and A.¹²⁷ highlighted that there is a growing number of young unemployed who committed suicide in the last years in their neighborhood.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹²⁸ Trade unions do not defend workers rights.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹²⁹ I am aware of the existence of local trade unions but I have never been in a trade union office.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹³⁰ I often benefited by CARITAS¹³¹ support for food.

They all highlighted that the economic crisis and policies against smuggling activities strengthened the black market resilience instead of downsizing corruption. They added that they daily experience some job offer or invitations to take part in the local drugs smuggling activities.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹³² The legal fight against smugglers has been detrimental for young unemployed. However, there are still many illegal activities going on here. For

¹¹⁹ Interviews 17, 18 and 24, 25, 26.

¹²⁰ Interview 24 and 26.

¹²¹ Interview 24 and 26.

¹²² Interview 26.

¹²³ Interviews 9, 10 and 12.

¹²⁴ Interview 17.

¹²⁵ Interview 26.

¹²⁶ Interview 25.

¹²⁷ Interviews 24 and 26.

¹²⁸ Interview 25.

¹²⁹ Interview 24.

¹³⁰ Interview 26.

¹³¹ Christian Catholic religious NGO.

instance, very poor families still collect iron or other materials and sell it for recycling, even if this is forbidden by law.

4.1.3 Aspirations

Case 1; group 1¹³³. The young unemployed Italians and immigrants, involved in the activities of *CD Giambellino*, who took part in the Milan focus group, described a diverse range of aspirations that are not addressed in their present conditions. They would not ask for economic support to their relatives who often could not in any case help them for their situation of long term unemployed. The lack of money for their daily needs seemed to be their first source of concern.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁴ I avoid to buy what I do not need because I do not want to ask for support.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁵ I do not feel happy without money.

They highlighted specific conditions (e.g. housing, public transports) of their neighborhood as detrimental for the achievement of their aspirations.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁶ We would like better houses and to be better connected by public transports to the rest of the city.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁷ We feel that here there is not enough presence of security forces.

They expressed the need for a more comprehensive and adequate involvement in policy making processes. They would like to be heard in order to define better public policies contrasting youth exclusion. They highlighted the need of a more effective and transparent path to be eligible for passive policies when they lose their jobs.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁸ We would like more focused and specific youth policies.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹³⁹ I would like to chose for my future not at age 14 but to have the time for a more comprehensive understanding to make my choices.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹⁴⁰ I would like to have knowledge about contracts and youth rights.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹⁴¹ I would like that the employment support providers really helped the youngsters to look for a good job. It would be helpful to have continuity between school and the labour market.

¹³² Interviews 25 and 26.

¹³³ Interviews 3 to 12.

¹³⁴ Interview 5.

¹³⁵ Interview 4.

¹³⁶ Interviews 3 to 12.

¹³⁷ Interview 5.

¹³⁸ Interview 12.

¹³⁹ Interview 5.

¹⁴⁰ Interview 12.

¹⁴¹ Interiew 9.

#: [Case 1; group 1]¹⁴² *When I lose my job, I would like to be able to obtain a subsidy. This is never the case if I do not have a contract.*

Case 2; group 1¹⁴³. The young unemployed women, involved in the activities of *Presidio Scampia*, who took part in the first focus group of the Naples case study described a diverse range of aspirations that are not addressed in their present conditions. They would like to find a job related to what they studied. They want better job conditions and passive policies to face periods of unemployment. They aspire to a more transparent labour market and a less corrupted labour market. They highlighted that this can happen only with a bottom-up change.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁴ *I want a long-term contract and a subsidy to cover the periods when I am unemployed. I would like to help my family. My aspirations are to give a different environment to the kids. This can be done only with a bottom-up change.*

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁵ *I would like to aspire to have a job related to my studies. I would like that my brothers finish their secondary school. Only this can make my future deserving and free.*

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁶ *First of all, I would like that my brothers find a good employment. Then I would like to be satisfied by my work experiences.*

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁷ *My only aspiration is to find a paid job with a legal contract.*

They highlighted specific conditions of their neighborhood as detrimental for the achievement of their aspirations.

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁸ *We want that people of the neighborhood get their house and are not forced to occupy empty buildings. We want that the schools and universities that are building up in this area are completed and open.*

#: [Case 2; group 1]¹⁴⁹ *I would like to see more companies and entrepreneurs investing in Scampia.*

Case 2; group 2¹⁵⁰. The young unemployed men, involved in the activities of *GRIDAS* who took part in the second focus group of the Naples case study described a diverse range of aspirations that are not addressed in their present conditions. They all aspire to work with better contracts. However, they generally appeared very disillusioned and negative about their future. In some cases they appeared depressed and socially excluded.

¹⁴² Interview 4.

¹⁴³ Interviews 19 to 23.

¹⁴⁴ Interviews 19.

¹⁴⁵ Interview 20.

¹⁴⁶ Interviews 19 to 23.

¹⁴⁷ Interview 23.

¹⁴⁸ Interviews 21.

¹⁴⁹ Interviews 20.

¹⁵⁰ Interviews 17, 18 and 24, 25, 26.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵¹ I would like that my family has influential friendships to find a good job for me and my father. I want an ordinary contract that allows me to have my rights.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵² I aspire to find a good job, starting with an apprenticeship contract.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵³ I would like to clean up my neighborhood. This would be a good job opportunity for me.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵⁴ I would like to work less hours per day.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵⁵ I feel de-motivated, I would like to regain some hope that I have lost after the beginning of the economic crisis. I spend almost all the day in my home because I do not feel comfortable when I meet my peers.

#: [Case 2; group 2]¹⁵⁶ On the one hand, I feel repressed by the system and not represented in party politics. On the other hand, I do not want to give up my fight otherwise I would have already lost any chance to aspire to a better future.

4.1.4 Social innovation

If at the national level, a general lack of innovative policies oriented to disadvantage youth has been highlighted¹⁵⁷, at the local level, a number of good practices involving networks of unions, third and body sectors, municipalities and employment support providers have been quoted.

However, the major existing public policies tackling unemployment are generally perceived by the youngsters as not innovative. In reference to the *Youth Guarantee*, the available regional and provincial guidelines seemed not particularly effective for the needs of the disadvantaged youth. Moreover, internships and vocational trainings for young workers are perceived as not oriented to the major firm's needs. In some cases the youngsters cannot participate to regional trainings oriented to work because cannot afford to pay the fees. Finally, the passive policies (included the *Social Card* and guaranteed minimum income) are perceived by the youngsters as fully inadequate to tackle the rising numbers of unemployed.

As it emerged during the focus groups, a possible innovation in public policies tackling unemployment can be a structured participation of the disadvantaged youth in the policy making process. For instance, in the framework of the *Youth Guarantee*, the youngsters perspective has not been taken seriously. This has been brought mainly about by the absence of structured youth organizations at the local level and the poor role played by the younger population in unions and business associations.

¹⁵¹ Interview 17.

¹⁵² Interview 25.

¹⁵³ Interview 26.

¹⁵⁴ Interview 26.

¹⁵⁵ Interview 24.

¹⁵⁶ Interview 18.

¹⁵⁷ See Wp3 report.

Our empirical research highlighted overlapping problematic issues and differences among the two case studies that emerged in reference to the implications of the economic crisis, the consequences of spread social inequalities, participation within the third sector associations and in policy making processes, future aspirations of the youngsters and the black market resilience. In table II, a comparative perspective between the two case studies is provided.

Table II: Scampia and Giambellino a comparative perspective

	Disadvantaged youth	Policies	Participation	Aspirations
Naples Scampia	<p>They are female and long-term young unemployed (15-24 years old) with low levels of education. Their familial background and the residency in Scampia are additional reasons of exclusion. Some of the interviewees were former detainees or their relatives spent periods in prison.</p> <p>Their parents were all long term unemployed or with precarious contracts: they have been badly affected by the economic crisis, even if the disadvantage is perceived as an enduring condition.</p> <p><i>Scampia</i> appeared really degraded and youth very easily get involved in mafias and corruption related economic activities.</p>	<p><i>Youth Guarantee</i> is not perceived as an innovative or reliable policy to enhance the opportunity to enter in the labour market.</p> <p>The apprenticeship contracts seemed to be misused.</p> <p>Employment support services are not considered as useful by the youngsters to find a job. Passive policies to tackle youth exclusion are lacking or ineffective.</p>	<p>In Scampia, the youngsters' participation in policy making processes is not supported neither favored.</p> <p>In disadvantaged areas, the vulnerable youth is often approached by the black market. However, the youngsters appeared to be very motivated to participate in the involved association activities and anti-mafias programmes.</p> <p>They are all aware of the functions of trade unions even if they do not consider them as effective.</p> <p>Many of the interviewee participated to demonstrations for labour rights in the previous six months.</p>	<p>The youngsters highlighted a diverse range of aspirations that are not addressed.</p> <p>They all aspire to work with better contracts. However, they generally appeared very disillusioned and negative about their future.</p> <p>They would like to have a stable job or at least a job opportunity for one of their family members.</p> <p>They would like to find a job related to what they studied.</p> <p>They want passive policies to face periods of unemployment.</p> <p>They highlighted that this can happen only with a bottom-up change.</p> <p>They highlighted specific conditions of their neighborhood as detrimental for the achievement of their aspirations.</p>

	Disadvantaged youth	Policies	Participation	Aspirations
Milan Giambellino	<p>They are long-term unemployed (15-24 years old) with low levels of education and young immigrants. The familial background is hugely relevant as a source of disadvantage. And generally, public schools did not help them in finding a job.</p> <p>They do not want to be helped by their families. They would accept any kind of job or not well paid casual work in order to have some economic independence from their families.</p> <p>They agreed that their citizenship is detrimental for finding a good job.</p>	<p><i>Youth Guarantee</i> is perceived as not innovative and almost unknown for many disadvantaged young unemployed.</p> <p>Employment support services are known by the youngsters but considered as not useful. Trainings within public schools appear to be insufficient in enhancing the possibilities to find a job.</p> <p>Passive policies (e.g. Social Card, minimum income, etc,) to tackle youth exclusion did not help the interviewed youngsters. They (especially if immigrants) easily accept low wages and precarious jobs.</p>	<p>The disadvantaged youth does not participate at any level in the definition of the public policies. Youngsters are not represented by unions, public administration nor third sector.</p> <p>They appeared to have never been approached by trade unions or be aware of their functions.</p> <p>However, they are strongly taking part in the association activities.</p> <p>They do not participate to the negotiation processes on the major policies tackling unemployment and social exclusion.</p> <p>Some of them had experienced a certain degree of consciousness of the resilience of local black markets in parallel with the enhanced economic crisis.</p>	<p>All the youngsters considered the existing policies as not innovative.</p> <p>They emphasized a need to favor experimental policies in particular in vocational training, enabling a constant involvement of the disadvantaged youth.</p> <p>They aspire to have more effective employment support providers.</p>

4.2 Analytical dimensions

Making count the perspective of youngsters about their social needs, concerns and aspirations can be helpful for more innovative policies tackling the youth exclusion. For instance, according to the *Youth Guarantee*¹⁵⁸ guidelines, the perspective of the youngsters should be taken into account in the policy making process with dedicated sessions at the municipal level. However, as shown by our case studies, this never happens or gives only a marginal room for the youngsters' points of view.

As a result of our participatory research, we agreed that social innovation is not a separate notion, but entails taking the perspectives of youngsters into account, a strengthened participation in the policy making processes and an enhanced capacity to define aspirations or to be able to aspire.

4.2.1 Social inequalities

The youngsters involved in this research experienced a number of social inequalities. They appeared to be excluded to higher levels of education, often for their poor familial background. However, even if they completed a secondary school, this seems to be not helpful for finding a job because the available public education system does not allow them to approach the labour market easily. In their families there is at least one or more long term unemployed and their peers (e.g. sisters, brothers, cousins) are all unemployed or with precarious jobs. They all experienced housing related discriminations: often living in degraded buildings or been forced to live with their families.

They all seemed very negative about their future and possibility to find a better job, for this reason they are ready to accept jobs on call or not paid occasional works only to begin to get closer to the labour market. These youngsters daily experienced some job offer from smugglers and the black market. Many of them refused to enter into the black market even if, especially after the economic crisis, this seems the only available alternative for finding a job in their area.

A special source of social inequality is related to gender discrimination for young women who, especially in the Southern regions, often cannot find a job and are long term unemployed. A diverse range of discriminations has been experienced by young immigrants who usually are exploited at work, do not have contracts and live in poor or bad housing conditions. Sometimes more than a family is forced to live in the same house. They are easily approached by criminals and smugglers, often arrested for small crimes. Same kinds of discriminations are experienced by former detainees who often are forced to accept non paid jobs or inadequate labour conditions only for their peculiar background. Thus they considered as an obligation to not be able to aspire to a better contract.

¹⁵⁸ See Wp3 report.

Their capability to aspire is deeply affected by the experienced inequalities. These youngsters appeared not willing to address their critiques to national and local stakeholders. They often appeared depressed and had their families as the only reference to survive. In some cases¹⁵⁹, they trusted social assistance professionals because they experienced a long term connection with them. This pushed them to take part in the activities of some associations, like *Libera*, that helped them to aspire for a more transparent labour market or to fight against corruption and local mafias or to take part to social movements against the rising unemployment rates or subscribe to local trade unions.

The interviews and focus groups have been carried out within the network of a vibrant and demanding NGO. *Libera* is deeply engaged in promoting a culture of legality and anti-corruption programs. Especially in the Milan case study, CD (Comunità del Giambellino)¹⁶⁰ has been a central reference for the disadvantaged young people of this area to promote the youngsters rights, enhancing the relationship with their peers and paths of social inclusion.

Many of the youngsters have been helped by the association to find a job or a contract or to enhance their capability to aspire. After our focus group, a number of meetings with local trade unions (CGIL) and employment support providers (CPI) have been organized as workshops on the opportunities offered by the *Jobs Act* and the *Youth Guarantee* to the unemployed young people who took part in our focus group. During the research process, all the youngsters appeared very motivated to find a solid path for an independent economic life and to leave their family homes or get involved in traineeship programs.

In Naples, especially *GRIDAS*¹⁶¹ is gathering the needs of young unemployed people in the district of Scampia where the public institutions are perceived as completely unaware of the black market presence. The social assistance professionals were deeply dedicated to enhance the political awareness of the unemployed youngsters who took part in the association activities, trying to help them to enhance their opportunities to enter into the local labour market or make their voice been heard by local institutions, even organizing protests and contestations. Many of the youngsters who took part in our focus group appeared very interested in an enhanced knowledge of the existing public policies to tackle unemployment and their opportunities to be eligible for it. However, they seemed completely de-motivated to pursue in their targets.

¹⁵⁹ Case 1 group 1; Case 2 group 2.

¹⁶⁰ Case 1, group 1. See the Introduction.

¹⁶¹ Case 2, group 2, see the Introduction.

4.2.2 Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

This research gave us the opportunity to disentangle the occasions that these young people had to their capability to aspire. However, a general weakness of the available opportunities to have a more comprehensive understanding of the possibilities to enhance their present job and familial conditions has been highlighted by the disadvantaged young people.

Their answers highlighted that they were involved in a never ending process of educational and labour inequalities, disengagement, deprivation and poverty, already existing within their families for a diverse number of reasons as multifaceted disadvantages, permanent labour exclusion, gender discrimination, etc.

At the micro level, the interviewed disadvantaged youth has never been involved in policy making processes and more generally in contributing to defining means to tackle poverty and inequality.

In other words, a general exclusion of youth participation in influencing public policies aimed at tackling unemployment has been highlighted both in Giambellino (Milan) and Scampia (Naples). It is evident that there is an inadequate contribution of youth groups within unions, third and body sectors in policy making' processes focused on youth exclusion. Even if these groups took part at the some point in the negotiation process of the *Youth Guarantee*, their voice has not been heard or seriously considered.

The non-participation of the youngsters is not politicised. The effects of the youngsters disengagement are "poor public interventions"¹⁶² and policies not necessarily focused on the youngest. This highlights a more general need of a structural change in the local labour market with the aim to involve the youngest; enhancing the financial resources for this target group in order to better address their exclusion. As a consequence, alternative forms of participation have been highlighted in our research such as time spent in voluntary organizations or subscription in trade unions¹⁶³; in some cases participation in political contestations has been quoted¹⁶⁴.

However, the risk is that this non participation and the inadequacy of the existing public policies push the disadvantaged youngsters closer to the black market and corrupted habits, as highlighted in this research¹⁶⁵.

As a consequence, all democratic processes appeared to the youngest as not effective and unfair. The only point of reference is still the family and the social assistance professionals they know since their childhood and have helped or still help when they

¹⁶² See Wp4 report.

¹⁶³ Especially in Scampia.

¹⁶⁴ Case 2, group 2.

¹⁶⁵ Case 1, group 1; case 2 group 1 and 2.

lose a job or delay their entry in the labour market. This brings diverse side effects such as electoral boycott, lack of trust in party politics as a way of expression of unmet needs. However, generally this does not entail a more aggressive, violent or organized political contestation.

4.2.3 Freedom of participation

In a final stage of our participatory research we tried to involve and motivate the interviewed youngsters, as part of the focus groups of the two case studies, with writing and photographic workshops. The aim has been to finalize the research findings collecting data for ethnographic purposes. The target was to have a more concrete understanding of the youngsters aspirations in a way that was not mediated by stakeholders, gatekeepers or social assistance professionals.

In this instance the question we addressed to the youngsters was to describe or take a photo of what they would like to change in their own neighbourhood¹⁶⁶. The results were very diverse and especially fascinating for the *CD Giambellino* focus group¹⁶⁷. These youngsters¹⁶⁸ were already involved in photographic workshops so had a certain degree of knowledge about the topic. As for the unemployed women of *Presidio Scampia*¹⁶⁹ they preferred to participate to the writing workshop. Several interesting answers to the topic of aspiration and capability to change have been addressed¹⁷⁰.

Finally within the focus groups was necessary to deal with a diverse range of dynamics. In the Giambellino focus group¹⁷¹ to tackle the topic of unemployment and labour exclusion was easier for those¹⁷² who already had some labour experience. The Italians¹⁷³ often influenced each other; the same processes were going on among the immigrants with some additional difficulty for those¹⁷⁴ who had some linguistic gap. Those¹⁷⁵ who aspired to more creative jobs appeared more self-centred and less prone to listen to their peers. Those¹⁷⁶ who had some help from the NGO to find a job or a fixed term contract, on the one hand, were more motivated to discuss their labour experience, on the other hand, they did not want to clearly address the issue of difficulties in the labour market entry at the presence of their peers.

As for the *Presidio Scampia* group¹⁷⁷, the young unemployed women were often influencing each other during the focus group. Especially Emma¹⁷⁸ appeared aware of

¹⁶⁶ See Annex 1.

¹⁶⁷ Case 1, group 1.

¹⁶⁸ Case 1, group 1.

¹⁶⁹ Case 2, group 1.

¹⁷⁰ See the section on Aspirations.

¹⁷¹ Case 1, group 1.

¹⁷² Interviews 3 and 4.

¹⁷³ Interviews 4, 5 and 10.

¹⁷⁴ Interviews 6, 7 and 8.

¹⁷⁵ Interviews 5 and 12.

¹⁷⁶ Interview 11.

¹⁷⁷ Case 2, group 1.

¹⁷⁸ Interview 19.

labour market opportunities and inequalities. During the focus groups she was a leading figure who knew how to channel the discussion and motivate her peers to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in discussing the different topics tackled. However, they were all very happy to be involved in the research and to take part in writing workshops.

As for *GRIDAS*¹⁷⁹, the youngsters appeared to have different backgrounds. Thus the former detainees¹⁸⁰ felt some influence of a leading figure¹⁸¹. The youngest unemployed¹⁸² appeared often very negative and unwilling to discuss about the topic as one of their most important matter of daily concern. Some of them¹⁸³ were even very afraid of addressing the issues of local mafias and black market presence as delicate topics that would be better to not discuss in public even if protected by the anonymity.

5. Research Methods: A methodological reflection

This chapter provided an overview of the youngsters' degree of involvement in policy making processes. The methodology adopted has two components:

(a) Semi-directive interviews

The six interviewees are *Libera* coordinators and social assistance professionals engaged in grassroots associations focused on supporting disadvantaged youth in degraded areas. The data, collected through the interviews, in combination with secondary data, provided in previous sections, allowed a comprehensive understanding of the lack of youth involvement in public policies definition and development. The interviews were problem-centered with the aim to define: subjects and objects of intervention, evaluate the effectiveness of the activities provided by the associations, describe the specific needs and demands of unemployed youth at the local level, their level of participation, structural and social factors influencing policies and their capability to aspire in connection with their social background.

(b) Focus groups

In this research we conducted three focus groups¹⁸⁴ with target youngsters. In a first stage we involved *Libera* representatives both in Lombardy and Campania. We

¹⁷⁹ Case 2, group 2.

¹⁸⁰ Interviews 25 and 26.

¹⁸¹ Interview 25, anonymous.

¹⁸² Interview 18 and 24.

¹⁸³ Interview 25.

¹⁸⁴ See Annalisa Frisina, Focus group, Il Mulino, 2010. The participatory research motivated the youngsters to describe their labour discriminations, work experiences and familial backgrounds giving an understanding of

contacted and interviewed in Milan and Naples¹⁸⁵ the coordinators of projects involving disadvantaged youth. They provided a general framework of the NGO targets and references to specific programs concerning unemployed young men, women and immigrants in the selected areas of Scampia and Giambellino. These professionals facilitated the contacts with the grassroots associations that we decided to involve in a later stage. Table III Shows the two case studies and the number of people involved in the process

Table III: Number of interviewees per case study

Case 1 - Milan Giambellino, 12 interviews	1 Libera coordinator, CD Giambellino social assistance professional; a focus group with 10 youngsters (3 Italians, 7 foreigners)
Case 2 - Naples Scampia, 14 interviews	2 Libera coordinators, 2 social assistance professionals (Presidio Scampia and GRIDAS); 2 focus groups with 10 youngsters in total (5 men and 5 women)

We then interviewed social assistance professionals¹⁸⁶ working for CD Giambellino, Presidio Scampia and Scampia unemployed movement (GRIDAS). They have been part of the process for the composition and organization of the focus groups. Representatives of the municipalities participated at some point at the definition of the preliminary meetings with the local associations (i.e., *Scampia* case study) but later on did not take part in the participatory research.

The focus groups have been organized with a specific aim to understanding the level of implementation and youngster participation in the preliminary stages of the *Youth Guarantee* programme at the local level. At the end of each meeting we had a debriefing session with all the involved social assistance professionals in order to talk about the group dynamics and the relevant results for their specific field of activity.

Initially we have found promising interest, especially on the level of involvement of the disadvantaged youth who are taking part in the associations' activities. However, a number of problematic issues had to be tackled in a later stage. In the Milan case study, the access to the youngsters had to be mediated by the social assistance

how a disadvantaged group of youngsters live in two degraded areas in Milan and Naples. This was facilitated by the involvement of social assistance professionals.

¹⁸⁵ Interviews 1 and 13.

¹⁸⁶ Interviews 2, 15 and 16.

professional¹⁸⁷ who had a peculiar relation with the disadvantaged and thus hugely motivated them to be fully involved in the research process.

In the Naples case study, the municipality wanted to involve the youngsters in our research through an official letter of invitation to the participant of the focus group. However, in agreement with *Libera* we decided to have access to the field only through the *Scampia* branch of the association. In the projects coordinated by *Libera*, a number of former detainees and students in summer camps are involved, among them we have chosen our target group for further discussions. A *Libera* representative¹⁸⁸ participated at the first stage of our group interviews with the young unemployed.

As for CD Giambellino, the social assistance professional Dario Anzani¹⁸⁹ organized and selected the youngsters among the customers involved in the activities of the association, following our general indications. It was not easy to set the first focus group due to several activities involving the disadvantaged youth¹⁹⁰. However, the young unemployed or with precarious jobs¹⁹¹ appeared very motivated to answer to our questions and discuss their major problems related to the barriers to enter into the labour market or to what extent the experienced inequalities have affected their aspirations. Especially, the immigrants appeared more prone to fall into black market activities, no-paid jobs but very motivated to better understand labour market possibilities and ask for help at the local employment support providers.

As for Presidio Scampia, Daniela Minardi¹⁹² gave us access to the confiscated land owned by the local mafias. We met at the presence of a *Libera* representative a group of five young unemployed girls¹⁹³. We had articulated discussions on their aspirations and struggles to find a job, their familial background and the consequences of inequalities in the access to the labour market. We were especially focused on the features of the *Youth guarantee* that appeared to be largely perceived as not effective by those youngsters. They considered very poor the possibility to access to subsidies and passive policies in order to be helped in the periods when they did not have a job.

As for *GRIDAS*, the social assistance professional Armando Arianiello¹⁹⁴ organized and selected the youngsters according to the criteria we previously discussed in the first meetings. The group was formed mainly by former detainees¹⁹⁵ involved in programs

¹⁸⁷ Dazio Anzani, interview 2.

¹⁸⁸ Simona Finamore, interview 14.

¹⁸⁹ Interview 2.

¹⁹⁰ In the period we have spent doing the interviews, the CD organized a long winter camp to Poland.

¹⁹¹ Case 1, group 1, interviews 3-12.

¹⁹² Interview 15. This confiscated land owned by local mafia has been dedicated to Antonio Landieri a young man who has been shot dead by the district criminals.

¹⁹³ Case 2, group 1, interview 17.21.

¹⁹⁴ Interview 16.

¹⁹⁵ Case 2, group 2, interviews 22-26.

adopted by the municipality to help them to be reintegrated in the labour market. For this reason, these interviewees asked to be anonymous but appeared very motivated to describe their daily struggle to find a normal working environment. The social assistance professional highlighted that the youngsters are facing a period of disillusionment and disengagement due to the economic crisis and the continuing failures of local politicians¹⁹⁶.

In a later stage, we carried out the project involving the interviewed youngsters with writings and photography as data collection for ethnographic purposes. Further, we concentrated our analysis in data collection and participatory data analysis. We asked to the youngsters to simply represent what they wanted to change in their neighborhood and a number of good suggestions came from their part in terms of areas that should be re-qualified (e.g. abandoned infrastructures, transports to fasten the connection to the city centre, housing).

In reference to the methods deployed, we conducted reflective interviews, participation observations, and group discussions. With regard to the degree of institutionalisation these two entities differed, i.e. concerning the idea of voluntary youth work, compulsory school attendance, level of corruption and presence of the black market.

For our participatory research specific procedural requirements are taken into account. Policy analysis and an understanding of the socio-economic context has not been suggested or reminded to the interviewees. However, time has been spent discussing with participants how to defend their views and images. We guaranteed that every individual in each group participated actively, and that has had his/her voice heard.

Our links with the local associations and the support we have received from them might have been problematic when dealing with some groups or individuals, given that most of the youth who has taken part in the process received some kind of support from the associations. It is true that they might have avoided criticisms. However, the presence of the gatekeepers facilitated the discussion and generally the voice of the youngsters has not been mediated or obscured by their presence. We never entered in competition with the social assistance professionals who in many cases did not directly take part in the discussion with the youngsters.

There were no major episodes of dissent during the research. As for the CD Giambellino, the social assistance professional initially tried to create two different groups: one with immigrants, the second with the Italians. Eventually, he preferred to involve all together the youngsters in the process. As for the *GRIDAS*, especially the former detainees did not want to be mentioned in the research and frequently asked

¹⁹⁶ This is especially brought about by the coming local elections (May-June 2015).

not to disclose their identity, even if this was already discussed at the beginning of the process. At the end of one of the sessions, one of the interviewee¹⁹⁷ approached us saying that being a former detainee was not a cause of disadvantage per se. He added that he wanted to be sure that this was not one of the assumptions of the research¹⁹⁸.

Especially in the *Presidio Scampia* and *CD Giambellino*, the youngsters seemed very interested in being more aware of the available policies aimed at contrasting youth unemployment. They benefited from the participatory process because at the end of the process they understood the relevance of participation in the policy making process something that seemed to be not among the opportunities they considered as relevant before the interviews. For the involved associations was an important possibility to better understand the background of their customers and their previous or current job conditions.

6. Conclusions

This participatory research at the micro level is focused on two urban areas Giambellino in Milan and Scampia in Naples where the most disadvantaged people among the young population is concentrated. In these areas, the unemployed rates are higher than elsewhere¹⁹⁹, youth is socially excluded and not involved in policy making processes.

By adopting the Capability Approach as a grounding analytic framework, social inequality is defined as intrinsically multidimensional and intersectional in its features. At the macro and meso level, the most disadvantaged among the youngsters have been defined as those young persons (19-24 years old) long term unemployed with low educational levels. Young women and immigrants seemed to be especially excluded by the labour market for a number of different reasons in the two case studies.

This participatory research has been focused on policies that have the aim to contrast unemployment and disadvantage at the national, local and urban level. At the local level, three policies seemed to be relevant for tackling youth unemployment: the *Youth Guarantee*, the apprenticeship' contracts and the employment support services.

As a result of the interviews with the stakeholders involved in the research, we decided to be focused on the *Libera network – names and numbers against mafias*, a community empowerment association, engaged in managing confiscated lands owned by mafias. With the support of social assistance professionals, we conducted focus groups with target youngsters. In a first stage, we involved association gatekeepers who have been part of the process for the composition and organization of the focus groups. The involved youngsters appeared to have experienced a

¹⁹⁷ Interview 25.

¹⁹⁸ His aim was to not consider himself as socially excluded or disadvantaged for his previous detention.

¹⁹⁹ See ISTAT 2014 and the Introduction.

relevant lack of opportunities in a series of dimensions (familial economic background, access to education, territorial origins, gender and age).

Their voices and perspectives have not been heard by policy makers and generally they did not benefit by the existing passive and active policies concerning unemployment. However, they appeared highly motivated in being involved in the aforementioned association activities and often took part in its initiatives.

However, their aspirations seemed that are currently not addressed by the relevant stakeholders. The youngsters aspire to achieve better contracts. However, they generally seemed disillusioned and negative about their future. They would like a bottom-up change: this can happen only taking into account their narratives and empowering their educational and labour experiences. However, they seemed to passively accept the top-down policy making process without expressing their dissent.

As highlighted in the previous reports, the youth voice is generally not echoed and their perspective does not count in the IJJ (Information basis for the judgment of justice) construction policies. The disadvantaged youth has not been involved in policy making and more generally in contributing to defining means to tackle poverty and inequality. In other words, a general exclusion of youth voices in influencing and shaping public policies aimed at tackling unemployment has been highlighted both in Lombardy (Milan) and Campania (Naples).

It is evident that there is an inadequate contribution of youth groups within unions, third sector and business associations in policy making' processes focused on youth exclusion at the local level. Even in the occasion of regional official workshops on the *Youth Guarantee*, involving relevant local stakeholders, unionists, body sector, public administrations and third sector, the instruments to contrast youth exclusion in the labour market has been discussed only by the senior representative level. In the Scampia case study, it seems that the youngsters often try to approach or have a relative who has some connection with the local trade unions but do not find a concrete support for their needs.

Recently, especially in Milan, when youth representatives have been involved in the policy making processes for the definition of the *Youth Guarantee*' local guidelines, a general mistrust, among the regional and municipal political leaders, towards the groups representing young people has been highlighted. Especially the youngsters in Scampia and Giambellino barely heard about the available policies to tackle unemployment. Even if they had the opportunity to be interviewed for the *Youth Guarantee* by the local employment support officers, they have not been further contacted to begin their traineeship.

However, at the micro level seemed that there is a relevant gap between the needs of the youngsters and the existing public policies that is totally not addressed. These disadvantaged youth often need the mediation of gatekeepers in order to express

their needs, this never happen within the existing trade unions or political parties. For this reason, the youngsters do not express their dissent and usually downsize their expectations to be better placed in the labour market or decides to move to more advantaged areas.

They emphasized a need to favor experimental policies in particular in vocational training, enabling a constant involvement of the disadvantaged youth. They aspire to have more effective employment support providers. Some of them had experienced a certain degree of resilience of the local black markets due to the economic crisis. *Scampia* appeared really degraded and youth very easily get involved in mafias and corruption related economic activities. Young women in this area feel to be permanently excluded from the labour market. Former detainees agreed that they cannot aspire to good contracts for their peculiar background.

Finally, this report on disadvantaged youth at the micro level in Italy highlighted a series of limitations of the existing public policies (definition, development and implementation). Also the lack of well-targeted policies and sufficient financial resources to contrast youth unemployment has been highlighted. The young unemployed, especially if they are women, appeared to not be sufficiently involved in policy making. All these limitations are brought about by more complex factors, among them a general lack of job opportunities, the resilience of local mafias, a poor integration of young immigrants in the legal labour market, diminished economic resources for their families, a lack of courses oriented to work within the public schools, the inadequacy of the employment support services' networks, a lack of funding for passive policies (included the *Social Card*), a mistrust for young former detainees. The combination of these features make the disadvantaged youth more vulnerable than other sections of the society. This makes their voice less heard by the relevant stakeholders enhancing their social exclusion and certain forms of depression.

7. Policy-relevant implications

As a result of this research, there is a number of policy implications that local, national and European stakeholders could take into account for a better understanding of the disadvantaged youth' needs, a more comprehensive integration of these youngsters in the labour market and to enhance their capacity to aspire for a better future.

A mismatch between school and labour market has been highlighted, with a general lack for the poorer to accede to higher level of education. Moreover, vocational training schools should be more oriented to work and able to give the opportunity for internships within the firms for the youngsters who would like to enter into the labour market already during their years at school. The financial funding for upper levels of education should be available for disadvantaged families.

It is important to tackle the problematic conditions of long term unemployed avoiding that youngsters stay out of the legal labour market for long periods. This can be done providing a balanced passive support for their periods of unemployed in parallel with more effective employment support providers helping them to go back to the labour market.

The existing public policies seemed to not address the need for more job opportunities especially reducing firms and work's taxation and to be not integrated at the macro and micro levels. This can enhance the possibilities available for unemployed youngsters in a context of economic stagnation. In reference to the *Youth Guarantee*, it is evident that this policy has been not well developed and explained to the youngsters.

An understanding of the problematic effects of an excessive extension of temporary job contracts is needed. A possible solution, as highlighted in previous chapters, can be to narrow down the types of temporary contracts, introducing a minimum wage.

A general need to prevent discriminations for young unemployed women and immigrants has been highlighted by the youngsters involved in this research. At the local, regional and national level it is vital to develop capability friendly policies in order to favour the formation of youth groups, to empower the ways in which their aspirations are defined and its serious consideration in the policy making process. Hitherto, this has never been extensively done in Italy, especially in disadvantaged areas.

A need of enhanced public policies tackling the lack of adequate housing and efficient public transports in the involved peripheral neighborhoods has been quoted by the involved young people as relevant causes of their permanent disadvantage.

A fight against local mafia, as an employment provider, and the resilience of black market activities, especially in a context of economic crisis, is necessary to avoid that the disadvantaged youth find these opportunities as the only substitutes to their social exclusion brought about by their vulnerable familial background.

8. Appendix 1

Photogallery - Giambellino²⁰⁰



Segneri/Giambellino: a place to change
*"We would like a house or better homes"*²⁰¹

Photogallery 2 - Giambellino²⁰²



Cavalcavia Giordani: a place to change
*"We would like a better public space"*²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Case 1, group 1.

²⁰¹ Interviews 3 to 12. Zone 6 (Giambellino-Lorenteggio-Barona) has an extensive fabric of public housings.

²⁰² Case 1, group 1.

²⁰³ Interviews 3 to 12.

Photogallery 3 - Giambellino²⁰⁴



Metro line 4: work in progress

*"We would like to be better connected to the rest of Milan"*²⁰⁵

Photogallery 1 - Scampia²⁰⁶



Via dell'Abbondanza: a never ended school.

*"We would like a new school that could help us to find a good job"*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Case 1, group 1.

²⁰⁵ Interviews 3 to 12.

²⁰⁶ Case 2, group 1.

Photogallery 2 - Scampia²⁰⁸



Scampia University: work in progress.

“We would like to see students coming here and we would have more educational opportunities for our children”²⁰⁹

Scampia – Photogallery 3²¹⁰



Via della Resistenza: Vele, degraded occupied buildings

“We want a house and not to be forced to occupy degraded buildings”²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Interviews 19, 20, 21, 23 and 26.

²⁰⁸ Case 2, group 2.

²⁰⁹ Interview 17, 18, 22, 24 and 25.

²¹⁰ Case 2, group 2.

²¹¹ Case 2, group 1 and 2.

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Interviews

Case 1, group 1:

Interviewee 1: Laura Anzideo, Libera coordinator, Milan, February 2015.

Interviewee 2: Dario Anzani, Social assistance professional, CD Giambellino, Milan, February 2015.

Interviewee 3: Kirolos Mikhaeil, 18 years, unemployed, Egyptian Copt national, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 4: Salvatore Fiore, 21 years, apprenticeship contract, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 5: Pasquale Salerno, 20 years, unemployed, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 6: Cirpaci Codrut Elvis, 23 years, unemployed, Romanian national, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 7: Rimoun Rezak, 22 years, unemployed, Egyptian national, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 8: Timbur Judor, 20 years, precarious worker, Moldova national, Milan, March 2015.

Interviewee 9: Sara Desiré Casu, 20 years, unemployed, Eritrean origins, Milan, March 2015.

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Interviewee 12: Mohamed, 20 years, unemployed, Tunisian national.

Case 2, group 1 and 2:

Interviewee 13: Antonio D'Amore, Libera coordinator, Naples, January 2015

Interviewee 14: Simona Finamore, social assistance professional, Naples, January 2015.

Interviewee 15: Daniela Minardi, Libera, Presidio Scampia, Naples, January 2015.

Interviewee 16: Armando Arianello, social assistance professional, GRIDAS, Naples, April 2015.

Interviewee 17: Stefano Stellino, 26 years, unemployed, Naples, April 2015.

Interviewee 18: Raffaele Buonanno, 22 years, unemployed, Naples, April 2015.

Interviewee 19: Emma Viola, 22 years, unemployed, Naples, April 2015.

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Interviewee 26: G., 27 years, precarious worker, Naples, April 2015, [Identity of the interviewee in the possession of the author].

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CASE STUDY BELGIUM: The System of Part-Time Vocational Education and Workplace Learning in Ghent

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction: This chapter briefly sketches the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning in Ghent - in which our participatory research project is implemented - as the residue of the educational cascade mechanism, which pertinently reveals problems of social exclusion and exit of youngsters. Combining the theoretical framework of the *Capability Approach* and the interpretative paradigm of *Lifeworld Orientation*, we aim to gain insight in the meaning of (non)participation and exit in education of the youngsters. Therefore, we focus on the “capability for education” which refers to *what youngsters in the system of PVEWL may have reason to value in education*. In our view, a thorough understanding of the capability for education requires an in depth exploration of the resources and conversion factors, referring to the social factors that affect (positively or negatively) the ability of youngsters to transform resources into capabilities. Therefore, our aim is to focus on and produce process-oriented knowledge about the ways in which educational and social welfare actors can support youngsters in the system of PVEWL in their capability for education.

Research questions and research design: In this section, we focus on the methodological part of the research. We conducted a participatory biographical research with disadvantaged youngsters from a multi-actor perspective to explore how their capability for education was (or not) realized in the system of PVEWL in Ghent. Therefore, we mapped 14 trajectories, selected by three schools. Seven of these trajectories were perceived by the involved professionals as “successful”. Seven of them were referred to as “difficult”. We carried out 40 semi-structured interviews: 12 interviews with the youngsters, 28 interviews with practitioners. The research data were analysed in an interpretative way by means of a “qualitative content analysis”.

Research findings: In this part of the report, we analyse the specific pedagogical practices of the educational and social welfare actors in the system of PVEWL in relation to the realisation of the capability for education of disadvantaged youngsters. We illustrate the empirical findings of our participatory research, structured around the analytical node of “*employability or capability*”, and the theme “*plugging into processes of meaning making*”,

in which we provide thick and rich descriptions of the social reality created by certain concepts of the Capability Approach as they are lived out in a particular educational setting. Our multi-perspective research findings provide evidence of very complex social realities in which education intervenes as a pedagogical process that is characterized by ambiguity and contradiction.

Discussion and concluding reflections: This reflective section contains an in-depth interpretation of the empirical findings based on two analytical core dimensions: *aspirations and the capacity to aspire* (5.1) and *substantial freedoms of participation* (5.2). With regard to the first dimension, we elaborate on the brittle horizon of aspirations of disadvantaged youngsters. We argue that the pedagogical involvement of certain professionals in the system of PVEWL resonates in the way they recognise the aspirations of the youngsters, understanding these as socially embedded and formed through the interaction with the available social resources (material as well as immaterial), even when these are not consistent with functional societal or educational expectations entrenched in the employability-discourse. Concerning the second dimension, our research reveals the risk of narrowing participation down to loyalty or voice by perceiving behavioural compliance of the student is an indicator of a successful trajectory. In line with this logic, the exit of youngsters is framed as major problem that should be controlled. Nevertheless, based on a process-oriented perspective, our analysis shows that exit-strategies can potentially be meaningful against the background of the everyday reality of the youngsters and within the framework of their aspirations. We conclude this chapter with a *methodological reflection* (5.3) about our interpretation of participatory research as a multi-perspective research, which shifts the focus from “capturing the authentic voice of youngsters” to “a dialogue between contextualized perspectives”.

Policy relevant implications: In this last chapter, we argue to define the “the quality of education” according to a human capability model of educational policy, in terms of promoting and enhancing a youngster’s capabilities, rather than understanding it in functional terms of the formation of human capital and as an investment in economic development. As such, we make a plea for an educational policy that supports process-oriented practices.

2. Introduction

2.1 The system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning in Ghent

Our research project is implemented in the system of *part-time vocational education and workplace learning (PVEWL)* in the region of the City of Ghent, as a case study with strategic importance for generating innovative knowledge (see Yin, 2014) in relation to the *capability for education* of youngsters (Walker, 2005; Otto and Ziegler, 2006; Sen, 2009).

The system of PVEWL enables youngsters between 15 and 25 years to develop skills through a combination of part-time vocational education and workplace learning, while providing support of social welfare actors (Termote and Galand, 2012; Center for the fight against poverty, insecurity and social exclusion, 2011). In 2012-2013, 11665 students were attending the system PVEWL (Djait, 2013). The study *Education at a glance* (OECD, 2013) showed that only 3,5% of the youngsters in vocational education in Belgium follow their training in the system PVEWL (Syntra inclusive). There are twice as much boys attending the system than girls (educational statistics, www.ond.vlaanderen.be). Before 2008, about 35 percent of the youngsters in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning had, in addition to two days of classes, no day-activity during the other days of the week. Since 2008, the Decree Learning and Working (Decreet betreffende het Stelsel van Leren en Werken in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 10 July 2008) obliges youngsters in the PVEWL system to pursue a full-time engagement (28 hours/week) through an individual trajectory, combining part-time vocational education (2 days/week) and workplace learning (3 days/week) in order to provide every youngster with a valuable qualification. The component workplace learning contains different possible trajectories: a (full-time) “personal development trajectory” (PDT), a “pre-trajectory”, a “bridging trajectory” or employment on the regular labour market (for more detailed information about the trajectories: see appendix).

Notwithstanding the Decree, the system of PVEWL in Ghent is still perceived as the residue of the educational cascade mechanism in Flanders (Nicaise et al., 2014), which pertinently reveals problems of social exclusion and exit of youngsters. The SES of youngsters in the system of PVEWL in Ghent is lower than average in comparison with Flanders (De Boeck et al., 2015), and their educational delay and early school leaving is more than average (Belga, 2013; Sustainable Education, 2013). In Ghent, problems of exit are strikingly documented (see Lamote et al., 2013). The number of what are called “not immediately available students” (NIA) - implying their (temporary) drop-out from the educational system - stays high (20-25%) in Ghent, with 10% of them defined as “highly problematic”. The desired full-time engagement of the youngsters is not realized, but is in Ghent on average 65% instead of 100%. Furthermore, a striking truancy problem is reported. Moreover, only a minority of the students in the system PVEWL in Ghent obtains a diploma.

2.2 A process-oriented perspective on the capability for education

In our local network analysis, we tried to capture the normative dimensions of the discourses of policy makers and practitioners in the system PVEWL in Ghent and to grasp the components of their *Informational Basis of the Judgements in Justice (IBJJ)*, which points to the question which knowledge and information is judged as meaningful by the actors involved, and used as the foundation of a pedagogy of social inclusion. This network analysis revealed that the unqualified outflow, difficult employment trajectories and significant truancy in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning are perceived as deeply problematic, due to the loss of a collective investment in human capital,

but above all since the future perspective of the youngsters are discredited. This “persistent” non-participation and drop out - or “exit” according to Hirschman’s (1970) triptych – largely informs and inspires the political debate about social inclusion. From a policy perspective, an educational trajectory within the system of part-time vocational learning and workplace learning is categorized as successful when a youngster takes up a full-time engagement, is active on the labor market and/or obtains a qualification (preferably a diploma). This functional definition of success exclusively focuses on the outcomes (or the functionings) of education and implies a normative notion of participation, translating participation in functional terms of “good, socially adaptive and integrative behaviour” (Ley, 2013). While, from the Capability Approach, it might be interesting to try to explore the perspective of these youngsters who participate by the way of exit. Such forms of exit are, for example, unmotivated behaviour, truancy, temporary drop out, and early school leaving (see Stevenson and Ellsworth, 2006).

As such, we aim to gain insight in the meaning of (non-)participation and exit in education of the youngsters from a **student-oriented perspective**, assessing the “capacity to aspire” in a broad sense (i.e. encompassing the capacity to formulate one’s goals and aspirations and not being reduced to the – rhetorical, political, etc. – means of having an effective voice) (Bonvin, 2013). Therefore, as Bonvin (2013) asserted, it is also important to identify what the cost of non-participation is. Or in other words, how is the right to education available for those who do not participate at all or not with the expected “energy”? (Bonvin, 2013).

In the context of our research, we focus on the **capability for education** which refers to *what youngsters in the system of PVEWL may have reason to value in education* (Walker, 2005; Otto and Ziegler, 2006; Sen, 2009; Kjeldsen and Bonvin, 2015). As such, our aim is, in line with the Capability Approach, to place the subjective lifeworld and interests of youngsters at the center of our analysis (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009), referring to the possibility for individuals to be agents and to make choices, to influence facts that are relevant for them in their lives, and to actually achieve a desirable situation (Sen, 2009). However, within the Capability Approach, capabilities are not confined to psychological aspects of human “functionings” but are dynamically and significantly shaped by their environmental and social circumstances, both in the past and in the present (Gupta, Featherstone and White, 2014). As such, capabilities rely on an arrangement of living conditions of a material, symbolic, legal and normative kind that are necessary to allow the “flourishing” of individual capabilities. Bringing together those conditions (barriers and opportunities) and connecting them to the individual situation and aspirations requires a careful and comprehensive examination of the perspective of the youngsters, that is interpreted as situated within its social, cultural and political contexts (Lorenz, 2013). In our view, a thorough understanding of the capability for education requires an in depth exploration of the resources and *conversion factors*, referring to the social factors that affect (positively or negatively) the ability of youngsters to transform resources into capabilities (Gupta et al., 2014). Therefore, our aim is to focus on and produce **process-oriented knowledge** about the ways in which educational and social welfare actors can support youngsters in the system of PVEWL in their capability for education (Fielding, 2006; Lumby and Morrison, 2009).

2.3 A lifeworld orientation perspective

Our participatory research aims to broaden the *Informational Basis of the Judgements in Justice* (Sen, 1990, p. 111), by introducing a *bottom-up perspective* that privileges a situated appraisal of living conditions, identity constructions, opportunities for meaningful participation, etc. in socially unequally structured settings and by including the voice and aspirations of young people (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014a). In our view, the cross-fertilization of the theoretical framework of the *Capability Approach* and the interpretative paradigm of *Lifeworld Orientation*, that is rooted in theories of social pedagogy, offers productive potential for generating innovative knowledge about the complex interplay between individual aspirations and systematic forces in the search of human dignity and social justice in our societies (Roets, Roose and Bouverne-De Bie, 2013).

In this contribution, we draw upon a rich empirical basis of participatory biographical research with disadvantaged youngsters from a multi-actor perspective, which reveals, above all, the necessity to explore the dynamic and interpretable ways in which material, social and cultural resources and conversion factors as well as discourses need to be viewed as constraints, opportunities and limitations for youngsters in the revelation of their aspirations (Alanen, 2004). With Grunwald and Thiersch (2009), we argue that *lifeworld orientation research* should focus on the complex and dynamic relationship between the individual and society, as the everyday life is contingent on social and systemic forces, and that the youngster's voice should be captured in its interactional context (Komulainen, 2007). In this vein, our aim is to link endogenous aspirations, concerns and views of youngsters in the system of PVEWL with exogenous dynamics at play in the system. We argue that the vital issue at stake in practice is the pedagogical role that the practitioners in the system of PVEWL perform while shaping the relationship between the youngsters' individual aspirations and expectations of society, balancing the tension between their emancipation task and mandate of control. This tension also embodies producing and working with changing problem constructions in collaboration with the youngsters and engaging with the lifeworld of students and supporting them on an individual level while at the same time keeping open the discussion on the structural dimensions of social problems and the broader social and political context in which practitioners operate (Garrett, 2003).

3. Research questions and research design

3.1 Research process and research questions

The research questions and design, were shaped in cooperation with the Consultation Part-time Education (ODO), a steering committee in which the following partners are represented: Department of Education of Ghent, partners from the labour market, coordinators of the two centers PVEWL of Ghent, Syntra Flanders, part-time@work, center for education legislation and compulsory education, and the coordinator of the center

PVEWL of Eeklo (a neighbouring town). These partners obtained extensive experiences with the perspective of young people through their everyday practice in the system of PVEWL and are as such an ideal touchstone to discuss the research questions, design and methodology.

Both through our exchanges with the steering committee, as through the local network analysis, the notion of “success” emerged as a sensitizing concept that embraces a broad range of meanings and layers and practitioners balance on a tension between functional and more complex interpretations of both success and education. Therefore success functions as a central concept in our research. However, throughout the local network analysis, it became obvious that a number of trajectories evolve in complicated and difficult ways, for which various reasons were given: the structures of the system, the “target group” and their characteristics, failure of general education, ... From the Capability Approach, we therefore explore the perspective of young people who drop out, rather than only presenting the perspective of the young people who are loyal and adaptive and integrate into the system or actively participate in it. Therefore, we focus also on “difficult trajectories”. As such, our aim is to map complex and exemplary stories – selected by the schools (our gatekeepers) – that provide information about interactions / interventions / critical incidents experienced as meaningful trajectories that are evaluated as positive (success) or negative (difficult) by the schools. This selection may to a certain extent reveal the professional logics by which trajectories are constructed as successful or problematic.

Our main research question, embedded in the Capability Approach, is the result of an intensive process of discussion, and sounds: “How is the *capability for education* - *what youngsters in the system of PVEWL may have reason to value in education* - of disadvantaged youngsters realized (or not) in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning in Ghent?” What is the possible meaning of education, learning, support, ... for young people and how does this relate to the policies and (pedagogical) practices that are being developed in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning in Ghent?

3.2 Strategies of data collection

We adopted an interpretative research approach in which knowledge is considered as situated, contextualized, gendered, and grounded in human activity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Essential to our explorative, qualitative and participatory research design was the belief that the perspective and lived experiences of the youngsters in the system PVEWL can provide seldom recognized, yet valuable sources of knowledge. These youngsters participated as central informants with the aim of including “the local, situated analyses and knowledges of people on the receiving end of public policy” (Wilson and Beresford, 2002, p. 155). Also, the perspectives of the professionals engaged in the trajectories of the youngsters were broadly explored in order to engage in a qualitative in-depth analysis

(Bogdan and Biklen, 2003) and to install opportunities for ambiguity and possible contradictions.

The three schools in the system PVEWL in Ghent (CLW, CDO De Ronde and Syntra) selected in total 14 trajectories. Seven of these trajectories were perceived as “successful”. Seven of them were referred to as “difficult”. We carried out 40 semi-structured interviews (which were audio-taped and fully transcribed) during the period February 2015 – May 2015. In each trajectory, we started to interview respectively the youngster’s student, trajectory or employment counselor as someone who was strongly involved in the trajectory of the youngster and who could map the situation. This resulted in 14 interviews. Afterwards, we interviewed the youngster. Despite many attempts, in two cases we did not manage to reach the youngsters for an interview (difficult trajectories). As such, we conducted 12 interviews with the youngsters. Throughout our research process, it became clear that an in-depth exploration and understanding of the often complex educational trajectories of youngsters in the system of PVEWL require a more exhaustive mapping of the various critical steps and tracks during the trajectory. By introducing additionally one or two relevant persons (for example teachers, employers, supervisors of bridging trajectories, ...) – who were engaged in the trajectory and were perceived as important by the youngster – we took the perspective of youngsters on their trajectory serious, since the extra selected persons enabled us to contextualize the perspective of the youngsters and to interpret their trajectory against the background of social, cultural and political contexts and systemic forces. Another advantage of introducing more persons in the research, is that more space is created for and attention can be paid to ambiguity, complexity, tension, conflicting views, ... which we perceive as the basis for transformation. In this respect, 14 additional interviews were conducted.

Participants signed an informed consent form that clearly stated that they could end their participation at any time in the research process and that the anonymous character of the research was guaranteed. The interviews were audio-taped and fully transcribed.

youngster trajectory, gender, age	practitioners
Jelle success, male, 20	student counselor, practice teacher
Bilal success, male, 20	employment counselor, employer, supervisor of bridging trajectory
Stina difficult, female, 17	student counselor We could not reach Centina.
Gulshan difficult, male, 19	student counselor
Simge success, female, 18	employment counselor, two supervisors of bridging trajectory
Murat difficult, male, 18	student and trajectory counselor, practice teacher, general education teacher

Jowan difficult, male, 19	student and trajectory counselor, practice teacher
Eytan difficult, male, 17	trajectory counselor, school manager, student counselor
Kenny success, male, 18	trajectory counselor
Jason difficult, male, 18	employment counselor, student counselor We could not reach Jason.
Stijn success, male, 20	employment counselor, student counselor
Steve success, male, 17	trajectory counselor, employer
Shana difficult, female, 16	trajectory counselor
Ozan success, male, 17	trajectory counselor, practice teacher

Overview of the interviews

3.3 Strategies of data analysis

The research data were analysed in an inductive, exploratory and interpretative way by means of a *qualitative content analysis* (Wester 1987). In the analysis, the theoretical and empirical perspectives “were very actively fused” (Goodley et al., 2004, p. 64). The data were analyzed by engaging in a directed approach (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), in order to provide thick and rich descriptions of the social reality created by certain concepts of the Capability Approach (for example aspirations, capability for education, exit, ...) as they are lived out in a particular setting (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). The goal is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory, while using empirically-based feedback loops to support, question or refine the concept of “the capability for education” as a sensitizing concept (Patton, 2002).

Considering the findings in the research tradition of lifeworld orientation, we were particularly interested in exploring the experiences and issues of the youngsters in the system of PVEWL in Ghent as reference points (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009) to analyse the pedagogical role of the practitioners which is “located in the space defined by the conflicts between coercion and freedom, between oppression and emancipation” in the knowledge that these conflicts cannot simply be resolved (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009, p. 132).

4. Research findings

We analyse the specific pedagogical practices of the educational and social welfare actors in the system of PVEWL in relation to the realisation of the capability for education of disadvantaged youngsters. We illustrate the central findings of our participatory research, structured around the analytical node of *“employability or capability”*, and the theme *“plugging into processes of meaning making”*. These findings and different perspectives provide evidence of very complex and ambiguous social realities in which education intervenes as a pedagogical process that unfolds in a tension and contains contradictions.

4.1. Employability or capability?

4.1.1 Fuck you?! Bad attitude or serious call?

Throughout the interviews with the practitioners, it became clear that the major problem in the trajectories which are pointed out as difficult, is defined in terms of absence of motivation or opinion: the youngster does not know what he or she wants, is not motivated and cannot persevere. This professional logic is particularly illustrated by the reasoning of the employment counselor in relation to the “difficult” trajectory of Jason:

Employment counselor: Jason followed different courses in several schools: administration, painting, printing and warehouse work. And does he already know what he wants? No, he still does not know.

Interviewer: Do you know why he came to this school?

Employment counselor: No.

Interviewer: Doesn't each trajectory start here with an intake?

Employment counselor: Yes, that's correct. I'll check his file (while looking at his computer, he reads out loud). "Jason was previously a painter. This time he wants to do something different. He thinks that the warehouse training may be an idea." He really is searching. It was asked what job he would like to do later. "No idea". And still, even after all these years, he doesn't know which direction he wants to go. That is so unfortunate, because Jason is already eighteen. It's something we do notice a lot with many of our students. You also see this in the trajectory of Jason. He has tried many different courses. But what really makes it difficult, is that we don't know what he wants to do. If we know the direction that Jason wants to go, then we can guide him towards that goal. As long as he doesn't know which way to go, there will be no success.

Interviewer: What is success then? What could make the trajectory of Jason a successful one?

Employment counselor: According to me, knowing which way you want to go. But at the moment, he has been shopping from one training to another and he has not achieved anything. When he earns his second degree, it's a first step in being educated. I told him: "After this step, we will need to make decisions. Do you want to go on and achieve a third degree or your diploma?" However, those decisions are only possible when he knows what he wants to do. I fear that his trajectory will stay difficult, unless Jason and I find out which direction he wants to go. (...) The problem isn't really located in school. The problem is that he still is seeking for direction.

The employment counselor holds an argument for the importance of clear and fixed future perspectives of the youngsters as a condition for a meaningful trajectory. He problematizes the “at random” course of Jason's path, framing it in terms of abeyance rather than interpreting it as potentially keeping open the future perspectives in an educational context

at the end of the cascade, that might narrow down the range of possibilities. This employment counselor states convincingly – together with many other interviewed practitioners and employers - that orientation, motivation and persistence are – besides some other basic attitudes as accuracy and communication skills, which were frequently mentioned through the interviews - indispensable ingredients for youngsters in the system of PVEWL in which employment is both at a policy level and in practice formulated as the ultimate goal (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014b). In this vein, the employability of the youngsters is conceptualized as a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics and person-centered factors (Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, 2004) that influence a youngster's functioning in education and on the labour market. As such, employability, understood as an individual status (Lister, 1997) and achievement (Lawy and Biesta, 2006), functions as a norm to interpret a youngster's situation and functioning, and might work out as an exclusion criterion in the system of PVEWL, as it was the case with Eytan. His tough trajectory is briefly sketched by the school manager who was strongly involved in his school career:

School manager: Why is this a difficult trajectory? Because this boy doesn't succeed in realizing the basic attitudes to achieve a good trajectory, like being punctual, persevering and taking responsibility, ... I will walk you through his file in the year he was here. On the twelfth of October he already had twelve b-codes, which means: illegal absences. So they only have to come to school for two days a week. The first week of September they only have to come one day. And on the twelfth of October he already obtained six full days of unauthorized absence. Taking a good start, right?! Shortly after this start, he comes into conflict with the principal somewhere on site of the school. Most of the times these kind of conflicts are related to smoking. So the file states: caught smoking on the 29th of November. But he denies everything, so typical. This boy has a bridging trajectory within the Social Service Department of our town, what at the beginning goes pretty well. But then, another conflict on school: being verbally aggressive. Followed by another conflict. The school does point out some points of improvement (being less absent, being more punctual) and the need of taking more control over his impolite and sometimes aggressive communication. On the upside: he comes more to school, so the b-codes decrease. At the end of January he only has 16 b-codes, so in contrast with his poor start, he only gathered four more b-codes. And then at some point he was caught outside the school at 10:38 a.m., during the courses. He was verbally aggressive and missing the required work outfits. You got to realize that we are already the 22nd of February and he still hasn't got the appropriate working materials. His bridging trajectory however keeps on going quite well. But then the b-codes are increasing again. As a consequence he needs to stay in detention, which he refuses. At that point we held a council in March to discuss the situation, because his behaviour and attitude in general are a problem. We invite his mother for a conversation in order to give the following message: he needs to get back on track. We arrive at the month of April and he doesn't show up at his bridging trajectory for two weeks. Moreover, he wants to quit his bridging trajectory. He wants to study something else. At that time, the fatigue starts kicking in. A suspension follows at the same time because of his behaviour. What happened? Another verbal aggressive explosion. As a consequence we organized a talk with him and his mother. His mother had promised to come, but didn't show. That is so typical of his mother at that time. She gives up because she doesn't have any courage anymore. Eventually, there still is a conversation between me and the boy where he tells me that he will be leaving. But that he wants to finish this school year. Nevertheless, shortly after, he is suspended again because of rude comments. Oh, I still remember this quite sharply. That was the day we kicked him from school, when we suspended him definitely. It was the day when we were preparing the school for visitors day. It all happened here downstairs. He was throwing all kinds of material through the hallway. And when I pass, he is arguing with a teacher who made some remarks on his behaviour. At that time I said: "It ends here". And we suspended him until the end of the school year.

Interviewer: I wonder, if he skips school, do you know why he doesn't make it to school?

School manager: Not getting out of bed or not having any motivation.

Interviewer: Do you know how this boy looks at his further trajectory? Or how he looks at his past trajectory?

School manager: He doesn't think about such things?

Interviewer: But what are the things then that this boy is concerned with?

School manager: I really do not know. Hanging out with his friends?

Both situations illustrate that the practitioners evaluate the trajectory basically on the level of the individual behaviour and functionings: the youngsters do not attend school, they quit their job, they do not obtain a diploma or certificate, they react verbally aggressive or not adapted to the situation, ... In this outcome-based approach (Proudford and Baker, 2006) education is examined on the basis of comparing the individual performances of youngsters, being in these cases: unmotivated behaviour, truancy, temporary drop out, ... which are considered as individual problems, rather than potentially meaningful behaviour.

However, the following situation particularly reveals that a clear and literal "fuck you" of youngsters towards education and its practitioners should not only or necessarily be read as individually unadapted behaviour, but might refer to the complexity of the everyday reality in which they are embedded and embody the request to be taken seriously. The following excerpt illustrates that the employment counselor is very aware of the problematic school career of the girl and the harsh situation at home, and that he as such, does not put motivation as a condition, but acts in a patient and humorous way, opening up the situation through interaction rather than closing it down. The specific "fuck you" anecdote was mentioned during the interview with the employment counselor and brought up – on his request – in the interview with the youngster:

Employment counselor: Her file goes back to 2009, and as you can see: our famous cascade mechanism. She started in school a, then went to school b, then to school c and eventually she ended up with us. It didn't go well for her on those different schools and she went down the cascade. Too many problems accumulated in those schools and especially in the last one. She also had to leave there. (...) Actually, this girl only had bad experiences in our educational system.

Interviewer: And do you know why she came to this school, to part-time education?

Employment counselor: Well, probably because they hear that you only have to attend school for two days here. That is the biggest motivation for most of our students (...) But I do have to admit, that since she's been here, it's basically been improving. She made a very positive evolution. She actually arrived at a time I gave courses and she was part of my class group. There was very little I could do with her. She was quite unruly. The only thing that came out was: "fuck you!" It was like a defense mechanism from Simge: fuck you. "Simge, do you want to ..." "Fuck you!" "Simge, would you ..." "Fuck you!" "Simge, could you..." "Fuck you!" Constantly, with everything I asked her. She gave the constant message: leave me alone, I want to be left alone. (...) But it's up to us to look for ways to break through that fuck you. We work supposedly with the most difficult teenagers and the naughtiest children. But I assure you, when you regularly have these youngsters on their own and you can get through even the tiniest bit, you feel right away the softness inside. You feel that their inside isn't that hard, bad or criminal. They are just young persons who had many setbacks in their lives and as a consequence built a very hard shell (...) For Simge it was important she could count on the persons she encountered with. That she could trust those persons. It's so incredible to see how Simge, especially if you know her from the beginning, has evolved towards a more open person that step by step finds her way in life. And I know, she has become older since her start here. But still, it's an

unbelievable story of success. Beware, sometimes, it can be very hard in her private life. It is a child that still has a very hard situation at home.

Interviewer: Your employment counselor told me an anecdote and he asked me to share it in our conversation. Because he still doesn't know why you did something. He warned me that you probably won't like it but that I still had to ask you. It's about your first year here and your answer on everything he said: "Fuck you!"

Simge: MOH! You got to be kidding me!

Interviewer: He asked me: "Can you ask Simge why?"

Simge: Why, I don't know. (...) In the beginning it was like, he is someone who is always laughing and I thought: he can never be serious. But sometimes that is just not amusing, there are times you have to be serious in life. I admit, I also have my days when I really laugh a lot, but I can also be serious. One time my trajectory counselor told me that he [the employment counselor] also can be serious. Then we sat down for a talk and we had a real good conversation. And still, when I have problems I turn to him and to no one else.

The above illustrates that - through our participatory research in which we focused on practices in the system of PVEWL - we unraveled a clear tension between the outcome-based approach, rooted in the employability discourse, and more process-oriented approaches, provided by the Capability Approach (Lumby and Morrison, 2009). The focus of this latter approach reaches beyond the individual achieved functionings, but rather recognizes that a person's capabilities are shaped by interactions between individuals and their social and material environments. An employment counselor articulates this perspective, in which the social embeddedness of capabilities is stressed, very aptly:

Employment counselor: The poverty, but not only financially, of this population, our target group is indescribable large. It's hard to imagine. I'm especially talking about the deprivation of opportunities in life. If I compare with my own life story ... My dad was a metal worker and my mother was a clerk in the textile industry, but I had a thousand opportunities in my life. I grabbed a couple of those chances, and I got successful. Most of our students here do not get any chances at home. I literally mean no chances at all. And here we can give them two or three chances. Because nowadays we are limited in how many chances we can offer. For example, in my position as employment counselor, I can offer these students one, two, or sometimes three opportunities. If they do not grasp the first, second or third opportunity, then they have failed. It's just unjust and unbelievable how there are double standards for these groups. And it has nothing to do with religion or nationality or anything else. This form of education is so limited in giving opportunities. Fortunately there are many people that are involved and take on many tasks, more than they are obligated to do. Because if you don't do it, you can't make a difference for these youngsters. You can name me all facets of structural deprivation of chances, of structural poverty and we often have them here all together, sometimes even in one and the same family. You have to realize that our students have to do so much on their own. (...) And once in a while they get some help, but actually, in my view, that is what education should be. A structure that allows people to stay themselves, and offers continued opportunities to develop themselves.

In this quote, he also describes how education (and its educational and social welfare actors) should function as a conversion factor in realizing the capability for education (what youngsters have reason to value in education), by offering a pedagogical climate in which youngsters can explore and evolve, and by also taking up tasks that go beyond their formal

mandate, since these problems are often so glaring that the capability for education can impossibly be realized without addressing these everyday concerns.

4.1.2 Eclipse?! Invisible and mapped messiness on many fronts

At this point, we will only give the example of Gulshan to illustrate how school careers are often interwoven with the lifeworld situations of the youngsters, and how the material reality “earning money” is for many youngsters the main motivation to register in the system of PVEWL:

Gulshan: I was doing my education in school d. (...) What I find a pity, is the way my trajectory stopped there. I was caught at school with some marihuana. I wasn't directly expelled from school. As punishment the three of us couldn't join the class excursion. What we did had to do, was to write several texts during one week at school. The teacher who was present didn't like me and he gave me really harsh tasks. I had to copy a book and I only had two hours. And even more he gave me stupid guidelines: 15 words on each textline, changing colors every ten words. We were like: are you serious?! Such a punishment is not normal. So eventually I left and didn't come back that day because I thought this punishment was unreasonable. The next day I returned to school. And I did serve my sentence, hmm, that sounds like I have been in jail. That day they also talked to me and referred to the day I left from school. I started explaining it to the principal. He said: “Yeah, but I'm sorry”. Then I had to look for a different school. (...) And then I went to school e. At first I went to an art school, all my friends were there. I did it one day and that was that. I can tell you for sure that I am not an artist. The next thing I tried was Tourism. I also had to stop there, because I had a lot of problems at home. I was living with my mother and that didn't go well. I spent a year really doing nothing, just sitting at home. I was 15 years old at that time. So I could not go to work. I had no money to eat, I had no sandwiches, I had nothing. I just stayed home all the time, and yes ... did illegal stuff to earn money. Otherwise I did have nothing to eat. My mother spent her time mostly in bars. Sometimes she didn't come home for two or three days. And then I heard of this part-time education and working. It seemed like a good idea to me, especially because I didn't have any money. So two days of school and the other days working. I could earn money. So, at the time I really thought it was a good idea. (...) And after one year in the system PVEWL, I moved away from my mother, as it had become really impossible: we had to move and the rent wasn't getting paid. Nothing had changed. My brother was living on his own because he didn't want to live with our mother. At that moment I went living together with my brother. That has been a lousy year because we lived with two persons in a student room for one person. He worked at night, so during the night I slept in his bed and in the morning he came home and he went to bed.

For many youngsters, at the point they end up in the system PVEWL, the freedom of choice is not an issue (which is obviously problematic as it illustrates that many youngsters experience social exclusion in education), but they rather completely lost grip on their life, and are not seldom excluded from full-time education. An informal conversation with a school manager provided some basic insight in the justifications of full-time schools to exclude youngsters: 1) they do not belong here; 2) the situation is too complex for us to deal with it; 3) the system with order cards that is used in difficult situations, and in which one violation leads to suspension. Also Murat was, as many youngsters in our research, excluded for behavioural reasons:

Murat: Yes, the first year I was in school k. What happened? I had taken the elevator at school with a Turkish friend of mine. The elevator however, is forbidding terrain for students, you can't use it. They expelled me for two weeks. After those two weeks I came back to school and I go to my class. The teacher was giving me a hard time. My behaviour was really bad, I realise that. It used to be real bad. Afterwards my behaviour improved. But at first the teachers were part of my bad attitude, they were going into conflict with me. And during that bad period I had one fight with a student. They immediately kicked me out. That was the rule, you know? (...) In my second year, I went to school f, where I had a discussion with the principal. I had got myself into a fight with a couple of students. The principal called my parents and invited them at school, this and that. I became angry with the principal and I pushed him. And they kicked me out. They put that situation on my file. Then I went to another full-time school. They didn't accept me because of my file mentioning my behaviour. Eventually I came to part-time education. What else could I do? No other school was prepared to accept me. I went to those different schools. You get what I mean? Nobody wanted me, so I only had one option left: part-time education. I actually didn't want to do this kind of education. But this school did accept me, not like those other schools.

The school careers of most of the youngsters in the system of PVEWL consists of a series of failed school experiences in a broad range of schools. We will only map the bumpy school trajectory of Eytan, outlined here by the school manager who consults his online file, but we could picture many similar school careers of the youngsters we interviewed:

School manager: He joined us in November 2011. Actually we can track his school history in his file. He did his primary education somewhere in a municipal primary school. That's just regular primary education, no special education. Then he has accomplished his first year of secondary education in school f. He achieved an A-certificate. In the school year of 2010-2011 he probably went to the second year. But he only followed this from the first of September till the 26th of September in this school. After that he followed full-time education in school h. This lasted until the fifth of October. As you can see, it runs smoothly until the first year of secondary education. But when he starts in the second year at the age of 13-14 years old, the problems begin. He left his second school after just several days. Then he goes to the school f and he stays there for three months. Remember that when he was in school h, he followed the courses "decorations, office and sales". In the school f, he did "construction decoration". But there he also quits. Then he goes to school i. That is yet another school. And there he remains until the end of the school year. He is doing his second year at four different schools. Eventually he does end with an A-certificate. Then he goes to the second degree, to his third year. There he follows "printing preparation". That will be in school j. So now he is already in his fifth school. And it all starts over again. He starts his year and the 19th of October he quits his training "printing preparation". And then he goes to the part-time education. So he is already in his sixth school. And then he's probably going to our establishment in E. to become a shop assistant. He remains there until the 30th of June. So he stayed there for the rest of the school year. And then he comes to here, school number seven. Actually, he doesn't change schools in an administrative way, but he does change in location. And he follows the training of painter for a full school year. In the school year 2013-2014, he returns to E. for the training snackbar employee. In the end he did eight different schools, ranging from decoration, office and sales to construction decoration, to care-nutrition, to graphic design, to printer preparation, to sales, to painter, and the hospitality industry.

Youngsters who attended six schools in three years or eight schools in six years are no exception in the system of PVEWL. As such, it is not surprising that some youngsters experience difficulties to orientate in the educational system, as the situation below strikingly illustrates:

We are all standing outside, looking to catch a glimpse of the eclipse, which in the end, seems to be invisible. One of the youngsters approaches me under acclaim of his friends.

Joachim: Hallo! What's your name?

Interviewer: My name is Caroline. What's yours?

Joachim: I'm Joachim. Are you a new teacher?

Interviewer: No, I'm not.

Joachim: So, what are you then?

Interviewer: I'm a researcher, and I'm doing research in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning.

Joachim: Mhm... I don't know that.

Interviewer: You don't know it? But you are part of it?

Joachim: Mhm... What are you doing this afternoon? Would you like to do something together?

Although this might seem a small incident, in our view, it symptomatically reveals the messiness of the educational (and social welfare) system, in which the youngsters of our research are involved, as Joachim is not even aware that he attends the system of PVEWL. However, many of the youngsters are very well aware that they ended up at the bottom of the educational cascade and that the system of PVEWL is their last, but not most promising option in the educational system, as expressed by Murat and Gulshan:

Interviewer: What would make school important and meaningful for you? What should happen to get that answer from you?

Murat: School was important in full-time education. I'll be honest. In part-time education school is not important for me.

Interviewer: And why was it important in full-time education?

Murat: Why? You have opportunities on different levels. Here in part-time, I do not know what kind of diploma I will get. I'm probably getting a strange diploma with nothing on it, except a signature. What is the use of that kind of diploma? If I would have been still in full-time education, I would consider taking on higher education after secondary education.

Gulshan: The ones who follow part-time education are already at the end of line. I guess there are not many options afterwards. I am right, am I? What's lower than that? Actually part-time education is the lowest of the lowest. I don't mean to be rude or harsh, but when you look at some of the students here. I know a student and he didn't understand that you can travel from Amerika to Russia. He was like: "No, there is nothing there." I was like: "Dude, are you serious? The world is a globe!" You catch my drift? That kind of people. At those times I wonder: What am I doing here? That guy doesn't even know that the world is round.

It might be clear that their downward educational careers ending (often due to behavioural reasons) in the system of PVEWL, did not turned out to be an empowering springboard for those disadvantaged youngsters (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014b), nor does their capability for education flourishes at this point in time. Instead their capacity to aspire is narrowed down. They do not expect much from education anymore, and some of them envisage a difficult employment trajectory:

Gulshan: I really want to have a diploma in my life, you also really need it. (...) I'm just stuck because I do not know what I want to do in my life. I'm now living together with my brother, but he is going to move to France. So currently, I need to stand on my own. Money is simply a priority. It sounds crude,

but it's true. So I'm looking for a full-time job. Yes, I need to look for it. But I have not visited any interim office. I'm standing there in front of it, and then I don't dare entering.

Interviewer: And what makes that step so difficult?

Gulshan: I do not know, I suppose shame. That's also the way it is, I don't have a cv and I'm not very good at selling myself. It's the same as I told you before, I never finished anything [during my trajectory within the system PVEWL]. It always goes like this: I work here for three months, and then I worked somewhere else for three months and... And then they ask me why and I have to say: "I've never finished it." It's like I can hear them thinking: he is not reliable if he hasn't finished anything.

The circle is complete and we are back at the beginning of this chapter: the plurality of the youngsters in the system of PVEWL is unmotivated and undecided. However, from the Capability Approach, this "fuck you" attitude is not the ending point of the trajectory, but instead the starting point of an interactional process. From the Capability Approach, the aim of education is to expand youngsters' capabilities, which are "the substantive freedom" youngsters have "to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value" (Sen, 1999, p. 87) and to realize the capacity to aspire, as formulated by an employment counselor:

Employment counselor: That is exactly the core mission of education: to search for motivation and to try to activate that motivation. And I think that our educational system and the way it is organised, is limping behind. It is not adequate for solving problems. And we have to blame the system. It is too easy to state that individuals are responsible for their failing and succeeding. It's the system that maintains those problems. And our students deserve better.

Practitioners, who are embedded in this educational system of PVEWL, intervene in the messy educational careers and living situations of the youngsters. As such, the vital issue at stake is the ambiguous and complex pedagogical role of the practitioners in the system of PVEWL. How do they locate their social pedagogical work in the arena of the everyday life situations and educational histories of the youngsters (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009), or in other words: how do they take the perspective of the youngster seriously? How do they try to realize the capability for education of these youngsters, balancing the tension between very difficult and ambiguous everyday realities on the one hand and outcome-based and functional policies on the other hand? Inspired by the Capability Approach, which is a response to the limitations of assessments that measure only desire satisfaction, resources or outcomes (Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker, 2007), our aim is to explore the context and pedagogical processes in the system of PVEWL. We want to explore the educational black box concerning the ways in which educational and social welfare actors in education can support disadvantaged youngsters to realize their capability for education. In what follows, we will plug into a number of exemplary pedagogical processes of meaning making, which are characterized by contradiction, complexity and ambiguity and take place in a tension between employability and capability discourses.

4.2 Plugging into processes of meaning making

4.3.1 Bilal

Adapted preferences and/or opening up possibilities

Bilal has left the north of Afghanistan at the age of fourteen with smugglers, after he was been mistreated by his brother, who was member of the Taliban. So he left his hometown as a refugee. It was a very long journey. Through Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey. He arrived in Greece and in Italy. And finally he arrived in Belgium. According to the employment counselor, the reason why he ended up in the system of PVEWL was a lack of knowledge of Dutch, since a full-time form of education is too ambitious. *“If you do not speak Dutch, you can not participate in full-time education.”* Bilal followed a catering training. We tried to gather the meaning of this choice by asking the employment counselor why Bilal followed this training:

Interviewer: Why did Bilal follow a catering training?

Employment counselor: The training kitchen staff and catering more generally forms, I think, forty percent of the offered training. Why? Because all students who do not fit in another course, end up there. What could we offer him? Administrative assistant? Warehouseman? These are serious courses. Welder? This is technical. He did not have the abilities. Catering is the dustbin of the system PVEWL. If they do not fit anywhere else ... And there is still an occupation shortage in catering. You can start there without having any prior knowledge. You don't even have to speak Dutch. And as Bilal knew how to make bread. That's something they learn from childhood apparently. I think he had never seen a lathe or a welding machine huh. So you cannot start there. So why catering? Because we could not orient him to something else. I don't think that working in the kitchen was his dream. I don't think he knew what his dream was. He wanted to work here as fast as possible, right? And earn money for his mother who stayed in Afghanistan.

His answer resonates a pessimistic perspective on the everyday reality in which Bilal has to survive and the “choices” that are available for Bilal. Also Bilal's reflection on his trajectory in the system of PVEWL, reveals that aspirations are strongly embedded in a context. It leads us to suspect that Bilal, who seems very satisfied with the situation, adapted his preferences to the circumstances and that the life he lives right now already goes beyond the expectations he cherished in Afghanistan.

Bilal: I'm very happy here. Because it is quiet. No war. Much respect. That's important to me. Satisfied. In Afghanistan, I did not study. Nothing. So I'm happy to live here. (...) The school, I was very happy about it, but I don't know why... It was good at each moment. No bad moments. The first day, the school showed me... Do you want to paint? If you want so, go ahead. You can choose. Do you want to work in the kitchen? Go ahead. Do you want to build things? You can choose. They showed us all of it. And I said: “I prefer the kitchen”.

Bilal's satisfaction possibly covers a process of social exclusion from full-time education (as slightly insinuated by the employment counselor). As such, evaluating his situation in terms of desire satisfaction hides the very problematic deprivation of education for disadvantaged youngsters. At the same time, reading his happiness only in terms of adapted preferences, might not do justice to the perspective of Bilal, as it implies the very normative idea that

one has no reason to value a training in catering and work in the kitchen, except for the reason that it is better than war. Therefore, it is necessary to have a look at his trajectory from a process-oriented and social and political contextualised perspective: What has happened during his educational trajectory in the system PVEWL and which aspirations are developed out of the situation?

We asked the employment counselor, why the trajectory of Bilal was indicated as successful:

Interviewer: Now, the fact that Bilal is a success, that's for you especially by the fact that he is employed? Or is something else crucial for you?

Employment counselor: A combination of factors. This guy is flourishing. That's why they started calling him Django. Django unchained. He is fully flourishing actually. In a few years time that guy ... I can only express it by means of sign language ... He walked like that (demonstrating a curled posture). And now when he comes in here (demonstrates a fluttering contentment). Well. That says it all. The fact that he is all right. His administration is ok. He has an apartment. He has work. He has some space for self-fulfillment. He functions well in his private and social life. That is incredible.

He refers to many aspects of life to evaluate Bilal's trajectory as successful, recognizing that the capability for education (the reason Bilal has to value education) cannot be seen apart from the (material) living conditions of a youngster. As such, he took – beyond his formal mandate – some initiatives that were necessary to ensure Bilal had enough financial opportunities to finish his training in a context in which he felt respected, while his social security was installed.

Employment counselor: He became eighteen during his bridging trajectory. At the same time he was officially recognised as a political refugee. And the guardianship ended as well. I told him: "As long as you come to school, I will be by your side doing the paperwork". I also told him: "You have to keep track of all the papers." I didn't want to pamper him. "But if there are things that are unclear, come to me and we will make that everything stays in order". So I took initiative to go with him to the Social Service Department of the town. As he became of age, the guardianship ended, as well as the financial support from Brussels. So I took him to the Social Service Department of the town, to figure out if the financial support that he lost could be covered by them. And we succeeded. Since he was eligible for benefits of public welfare, he was also eligible for employment within an Article 60. That Article 60 can open up so much possibilities. Bilal was flourishing at his bridging trajectory in the world restaurant. But that was ending. Through that Article 60 we could let him work there for another year. This cost was paid by the Social Service Department of the town, so the world restaurant had to pay almost nothing. An Article 60 creates the opportunity to work a full year and to be in order with social security demands. It was my intention to bring everything in order before his education came to an end. The goal was to create a clean slate, a good basis to start life on. Just as we had the chance to start from a good basis. You get what I mean? And it worked out perfect. In meanwhile he has a permanent job in a nice restaurant.

This financial support enabled Bilal to continue the bridging trajectory instead of being pushed by financial necessity in a less demanding full-time job entailing bleak prospects on the labour market, as everyday reality hinders some youngsters to finish their training:

Supervisor bridging trajectory: Afghans, those guys come from really far. They also realize the situation they are in. And they realize that they have to make their own success. Often they have to support their families that are in debt with human traffickers. So they send money to their family. And

the faster they get a job, the more money they can earn. Then you have a big competition by fast food chains as Quick and McDonalds. Those chains are saying: "If you want to work for us, no problem, there are no skills required. Just come and work here". And yes, the youngsters earn more money there than they can earn here. Because trying to survive on an income of 250 euros, that comes from a bridging trajectory in the hospitality industry, is really difficult. I try to make clear to those guys that it is heavy at the moment to work hard for little money, but that they will benefit from it on the long run.

As such, this supervisor is very well aware of the fact that education functions as a foundation for other capabilities and might create future possibilities for the youngsters. However, as argued before, many youngsters are not motivated to finish their training. This supervisor tries to motivate them by striving for high quality dishes, creating opportunities to learn and installing an enjoyable sphere, or in a nutshell, by realising both contemporary and future opportunities that youngsters potentially may have reason to value.

Supervisor bridging trajectory: Most of the time our students are fed up with school. And yeah, I try to motivate them to come to school. That's way I try to make tasty food every day. I can do less and come away with it, but I find it important that they can grow and have sense of self-esteem. That they can be proud about the dish on the plate, and that they can put the plate on the tables with a glad smile. I want to avoid that they say: that's just my job... No. I want them to take pride in their work. Some of the guys take pictures of the plates every single day and they put it on their facebook. That's just fantastic. They have pride and that motivates. If you have fun doing your job and you can present people something that they enjoy eating. (...) It's important that this place gets a positive image. So they can use their work experience here as a reference towards other jobs. So they then can say: "I worked in the world restaurant." The city has other restaurants, but those are more kitchens that cook in large quantities. There they cook with bags of food. Or in the kitchens of the Social Service Department of the town, where guys have to do the dishes all the time. In those places they are trained on attitudes: delivering work, coming on time, being polite, ... While here, it's about what they can do: slicing techniques, cooking good, ... (...) You don't have to come here for the money. That's not the point where I can motivate them on. You have to take a different approach. (...) The atmosphere, playing some good music, have some laughs, a little bit of talking bullshit and rag. My kitchen is rather loose and not up tight. But the work must be done. And I am constantly part of the kitchen and the work.

4.2.2 Simgé

Realising the capacity to aspire by engaging with the lifeworld

Following on from the last quote which implicitly refers to the capacity to aspire, we zoom in on Simgé's educational trajectory, which (as mentioned above), did not run smoothly in full-time education and eventually, she was kicked out for behavioural reasons. However, at this point in time, her trajectory is suggested as a success by practitioners in the system of PVEWL. She completed the training kitchen assistant and currently follows a training assistant cook. During three days a week she is regularly employed in and responsible for the cold kitchen of a restaurant. Next year, she aims to finish the training assistant cook and to obtain her diploma. Simgé explains that she didn't know what she wanted in life, but now, she is hungry for the future and she has drawn a very clear path to realise her dreams.

Simge: When I was 15 years old, I did not really know where I wanted to go, but since I really started working, and I started working at the age of 16, from then on I knew where I wanted to go. (...) I want the job that I want, as a cook. Next year I am going for graduation. Later on I want to travel with a cruise ship. I heard that you work for six months and then are home for six months. I know that six months out is a long time and I am going to miss it here, but making career is import. Being a cook on a cruise ship, I would find that the end!

According to Simge, the training, her teacher and her employer all contribute to the realisation of her future culinary perspectives, as they challenge her to develop her skills and lift her to a higher level.

Interviewer: Do you have the feeling that your dream comes closer by attending this school?

Simge: Yes, because I have learned a lot of things. When I came here, I had no skills at all. No cutting techniques, no basic skills. In the first year I learned everything from my teacher. I admit, I was afraid to cut my fingers. Now when I cut my own fingers, I am more like: oh, it's just a scratch. (...) I want to be a cook and the person that is teaching me has to be a cook. And he has to, when I make mistakes, tell me that I do so. When the cook in the restaurant where I work, is preparing something, he must call me and tell me how he makes it. So that I can take notes. My boss was just like that. He had his own way like: "Simge, come here!" And he showed and explained me everything.

Before she was registered in the system PVEWL, her educational career consisted of an accumulation of negative experiences and the student counseling center advised her to go to part-time education, in which she started with the abovementioned "fuck-you" attitude, not knowing which direction she wanted to go.

Her employment counselor reflects – more broadly – on this lack of motivation among the youngsters and how he perceives this absence of interest not as an insurmountable obstacle. He rather formulates the responsibility of a practitioner in the system of PVEWL in terms of creating perspective for the youngsters by mapping a path that also contains room for exit:

Employment counselor: Amazingly, how many of our students arrive here and have really no idea, and have no motivation, and do not know at all what they want, except being left alone. Yup. And it is up to us to say: we draw that line. You have an initial situation and you, as a coach, you know very well where you plan to go with that youngster. And that's a line. And you must make sure that you allow full play, that the youngster has a margin on your line. And you let him regularly turning around, but you stay with your line. I think that's very important. And creating a trajectory around your line. Is that what the student wants? Of course not. Of course not. Look, this is another example [A boy sits all throughout our conversation at the desk of the counselors, slumped, with hat and coat on]. He sits here all day long. With his hat and his coat and all things. The grammar school would kick him out. That's also why we are here. But nine chances out of ten that is turns out good though. Patience, patience, patience, and occasionally giving a good kick where it is needed. Figuratively hey. (...) And of course, the line grows and evolves.

In Simge's case, he initially took her along a training assistant kitchen (as he was her teacher before he became her employment counselor) and she experienced success, which enabled her to aspire a career as cook. However, the crucial breakthrough should – according to the employment counselor – not been situated, although very important, on the level of the specific training, but rather in the trust that Simge has put in some practitioners. Simge has

a complex background. She has Turkish parents. Her father lives in Brussels. At first sight, her mother is a progressive Turkish woman, but behind closed doors, she appears to be rather conservative. This manifests itself in the everyday life of Simge, who has to take a big responsibility – both financial as job-wise – in the household, while here educational career is not really supported. Also physical violence occurs. Simge states that her employment counselor has been a very important person in her trajectory:

Simge: Yes, I already had many conversations with him and yeah, we really have a good connection. I like him. We can talk about anything. I mean in my case, if I have troubles, he is always there for me. (...) The most important is actually that I have someone where I can get things of my chest.

The careful and reliable engagement of the employment counselor (and some other practitioners) towards Simge, in which her perspective was taken seriously, has been crucial in the success of her trajectory, in which she evolved towards a more confident person. The following intervention illustrates how practitioners engaged with and intervened in the lifeworld of Simge:

Employment counselor: Last year Simge became eighteen in August and she was scared. Her mother actually wanted to take her to Turkey for two months, to find a husband. We tried to solve this by inviting the mother for a conversation with Simge's employer. And the employer understood the situation and helped us out: that we needed the exact data from the flight tickets in order to check if Simge came to work. That was our game plan. Simge went to Turkey but she also had her ticket to return, with a fixed date. That was something the mother didn't want, a return ticket. So in our eyes Simge had a well-founded fear that she wouldn't return to Belgium. That are the kind of situations. That is also kind of our task, you know, to protect our youngsters against arranged marriages. It wouldn't have been the first time. We already had cases like this, that girls who are eighteen have to go to Turkey during summertime and return with a partner to marry. So... We were able to avoid it in this situation, and Simge has been incredibly grateful.

The quote above reveals that the capability for education is deeply embedded in a social, political and cultural context, and that for Simge, education in the system PVEWL possibly stretched her horizon and created opportunities to escape from a predestinated life. As such, her initial motivation to register in the system PVEWL "only school two days a week" transformed in "graduating", since this qualification might create future perspectives that she has reason to value.

4.2.3 Murat

Creating meaningful perspectives

When I introduced the research to Murat, he summarized his trajectory as follows: "*I was kicked out in two pre-trajectories and in two bridging trajectories. And now, I'm sitting here in front of you*". According to the student counselor, Murat was excluded repeatedly, because he did not persevere to behave in a proper way:

Student counselor: Murat is someone who, when he arrived here, came to school to sabotage the courses. His negative behaviour was a cry for attention. The trajectory of Murat has been one with

huge ups and downs. He's a boy who wants to do very good and wants to prove his parents that he is succeeding. But he is enormously influenced in a negative way by a group of friends and his own character makes it difficult sometimes. He can really relapse. For several weeks he is doing well and then in one week he demonstrates negative behaviour acting against his own interests. Sometimes he just makes it hard for himself. Like he is sabotaging himself. He can give teachers and counselors, on a personal level, a really hard time. And the thing is, everything he did good during the day, he's ruining it in 30 minutes. Just because he's stuck in his negative behaviour. And that's a recurring pattern with Murat.

Between his two bridging trajectories, he was put on k-codes, which indicate unwillingness on the part of the student and are treated as illegal absences.

Interviewer: The bridging trajectory was stopped by the organisation, while k-codes refer to unwillingness of Murat?

Trajectory counselor: Of course. If he would just have done what was expected from him, then they wouldn't have brought his trajectory to a halt. He also didn't show any kind of initiative. If we were asking him to show us some motivation that he will do better on other places, for example by going to some job interviews or by looking up vacancies. But if nothing like that happens...

On the one hand, the school wants to – and is also bound to do so by law - send out the clear message that unwillingness cannot be tolerated. On the other hand, the student counselor nuances the problematisation of the “unwillingness” of Murat, by interpreting Murat's way of dealing with the situation in terms of a temporal and maybe necessary phase in his trajectory, as it is his way to display his displeasure with the situation. It creates some space and time for Murat to come back on speaking terms and as such, this temporary exit might be a starting point to open the dialogue on the direction and goals of his trajectory:

Student counselor: Sometimes Murat is angry and then he has something like: I'm going to show you that I am angry. But you know that eventually he will come along. It just takes some time for Murat to turn by. Being his counselor, you know that he will continue his trajectory but that he needs time and space to show his anger. (...) But then you have to take some one on one time with Murat en talk things through properly. Like telling him: “Murat, you do find this important yes?” From that moment onwards he start to defrost. And then he starts to pinpoint points of improvement. (...) His though and macho behaviour is a sort of a makeshift when he is confronted with his own limits. That's something that has been recurring. He has like this kind of switch, from the moment his imago gets touched, to call upon his ultimate solution: showing arrogant behaviour and letting people see that he doesn't really care.

During the interview with Murat, I challenged him to describe his trajectory in the system of PVEWL in a few words:

Interviewer: How would you describe your trajectory within this school in a few words?

Murat: Amateur school. They don't have a high level, they have a lower level than other schools. (...) We do nothing in the pre-trajectory, you know ma'am. We sit there, we receive a book. The teacher is standing in front of the black bord and he's looking at us and we're looking at him. He doesn't talk, he sits behind his computer. You know what that is? Just not being motivated to work. The workshops carpentry that I did in the first grade, I had to do them again. I want to work, I don't want to go to a pre-trajectory, you get what I mean? I got into a conflict with one of the counselors there and afterwards I was expelled.

His first summarizing thought implicitly embodies the lack of future prospects (see also Murat's quote in 4.1.2), which he assigns to the inadequate training. As he is not motivated – and also exhibits this - to persevere in such a poor inspiring environment, his educational trajectory in the system of PVEWL was delayed. However, this reason why it is so hard to obtain his diploma, is not completely clear for Murat, as the quote below illustrates the complexity of the system:

Murat: I just don't get it here. I am in the third year now, and I am still in the same class. I don't get it. Did I pass or didn't I? I have done two years of maintenance worker and I achieved my certificate. Currently I am following the training forklift. But in the course of general education, I am in a class with younger grades. How is that possible? All my fellow students with the same age are in the third level. I was in the fourth year of secondary when I came here. And here I am in the third year, you understand? Actually I come here to achieve my diploma and then they tell me: you have to study another year. And another year. I have to follow one more year and afterwards my graduation year. That is still two years of education. I will be twenty by then. I don't want to study at this school until I am twenty, you know?

The student counselor recognizes this frustrating process, and assigns the lack of perseverance on the part of Murat as the central cause:

Student counselor: He already has the age of eighteen and I think that Murat is so frustrated. That he actually wanted to be further in life, that he already had a job, that he already had experience. You have to see his uncertainty about his future. He is eighteen and he is in his fourth year of secondary education. And that's it. With a sense of yeah... But when it's money time, he can't obligate himself to finish the job. He can not persevere at those crucial moments.

However, in the same interview, the student counselor refers to the practice teacher, who did succeed to go beyond and break through the "problematic" behaviour and "unadapted" attitudes of Murat:

Student counselor: I especially think that his practice teacher was the first one in our school that got through that negative behaviour of Murat. Even when Murat had a bad day, his teacher always found a way to approach him. In the beginning, he gave Murat quite a lot of freedom to do those tasks that he liked. And when there were bad days, that he gave Murat the opportunity to do demolition work. He gave him the possibility to break something down, to let himself go. And then slowly told him step by step: this is what we are going to do. He demonstrated an enormous amount of patience.

Continuing the exercise of summarizing his trajectory in a few words, Murat mentioned the following, which might be quite surprising, keeping in mind that Murat has difficulties with persons above him:

Murat: Any other words? Let me think... On the one hand this is a good school because of its teachers. That's their strength.

Interviewer: What is a good teacher then for you?

Murat: A good teacher has discipline, has respect for us, you know. You also have to show them respect. They can yell one, two, three times, but that's ok. They have to yell. That's why they are here. They work here. They have to take care of us, you know.

When he explains more in depth his appreciation of his teacher, he refers to the challenge and the relevance of the maintenance work they were doing together:

Murat: My teacher is simply the best. If you get to know him, you will laugh for sure. That's a good teacher. For example at school, we never had any lessons. We always worked on location. In order to paint, repair doors, fix things. There was a big room, and we had to paint. We had to fix doors, fix tables and stuff like that. We went to musea to do some painting work. (...) He is likable and funny. We have the same head, we have the same brains. We think alike.

The teacher in question reflected on his experience with Murat and referred to the skills of Murat, which he developed in a motivated and particular creative way through varied, challenging and possibly meaningful and valuable projects for the youngsters.

Practice teacher: I got to know Murat as a playful young guy. But a guy with lots of potential. The thing he loved the most was demolition. He had to dig out the garden of Kino to 30 cm depth. He was the max of a guy, working, and with the wheelbarrow, walking over and back for a hundred times, as a matter of speech. We did some good things together and accomplished beautiful tasks. He is also very pride about what he has accomplished. If you enter the Museum of Fine Arts, there is shop there. That shop had to be fully repainted and puttied. And we had three weeks to realize these works, because the opening of the shop was planned at that moment. And Murat came helping for two days on which he doesn't work officially. Let him paint a whole day long, in a manner of speaking. But it is and remains still Murat. The way he paints isn't always according to the best practices of the trade. But the end result is always good. Then I'm like: you can do it your own way, if the end result is the same, then I have no problem with it. (...) I tell him: make a little cupboard or bin with those screws and wood glue. In short, I give an assignment with different elements they should use. He did what I asked but he made his own construction. He has lots of imagination. What did he do? He made a nameplate with my name carved in it. He did sand down the wood, he used wood glue, he used the machine to screw, you name it. He showed his skills, for sure, but that wasn't the assignment I gave him. But you know, then he comes to me with that nameplate. That is Murat, a good boy, a sweet boy.

Besides the content of the tasks, the teacher also explained how he deals with the youngsters in everyday practices, drawing a broad line that entails some space for exit-strategies of the youngsters and the search for a personal approach:

Practice teacher: What I always tell at the start of the year: I draw my line. I saw it once in a movie, and then they had to stand on that line, right? Don't you know that movie? And the line is rather broad in my case. They can stand on the line, and they can cross the line. They must cross that line at least once. They have to know, if I cross the line, how do I react, how does he react? I don't have any problems with that. If it is unavoidable, get into a fight with each other, or have a good yell at each other. But after two seconds it has to pass. It's necessary that you can get over it. And Murat is someone who once in a while crossed the line. We had some serious altercations, but that stays in my classroom. I don't go downstairs start telling that he had to be expelled from my class. And Murat has sometimes walked on the line. Probably because their was an audience. I handled him with a hug, a this and a that. Then you get him on the good side. Someone who is above him, that's always difficult. And especially when that person says: "Now Murat you have to do this, and exactly in this way and you have one hour to do so". Then he just freaks out. That he really can't stand. With Murat you have to take a different approach. More like: "Murat, this is what has to be done and I will come back in half an hour to check". And just giving him a hug and saying: "Murat, come on, we go for it!"

4.2.4 Jowan

Interpreting and dealing with exit

In line with the last quote concerning exit, we will zoom in on the trajectory of Jowan, who follows already three years the training “building maintenance worker” in the system PVEWL. The practitioners presented his trajectory as a very difficult one due to his absences:

Trajectory counselor: It’s a difficult trajectory. From the very start his absences play tricks on him, like a thread throughout his school career. It’s very frustrating because he is a good guy with lots of capacities. When he’s present, he’s motivated and cooperative. You have conversations with him in which you feel his enthusiasm, you feel his will to accomplish something and to succeed. But then the day after, you are once more confronted with the fact that he is absent. He can’t get out of his bed. Or there is other stuff that crosses his path. (...) Despite the fact that the we serve it on a plate. One of our teachers has been at his door, ringing him out of his bed and motivating him: “Come on, get dressed, we are out of here, we’re going to a workplace where we have some jobs to do.” Despite all those efforts, we can’t get him to school.

In the course of the research period, it was decided at a class council, that Jowan gets his very last chance to overturn the situation. Otherwise, his trajectory in the system PVEWL would know its end:

Practice teacher: We just had a class council about Jowan. He has to be present Monday morning. And then we are going to make something clear to him. If he doesn’t come on time at school or at work, or if he is absent or leaves at noon, then it’s over. It’s really a pity. But you can’t keep on. In the three years that he is here, he has done an enormous amount of bridging trajectories. He always started but each time, he was kicked out due to his absences. Starting, being absent, being expelled. (...) And when we look back to the three past years and consider the facts – and I’m going to be harsh – if he worked during 4 months in those years, it will be broad estimate. In March of this year, he started working at the Social Service Department of the town, but it doesn’t run smoothly at all. He is almost never there. He calls in the morning to communicate that he is sick or that his mother is sick. He comes in late. Sometimes he doesn’t come at all. Sometimes he lets us know something, sometimes he doesn’t. From the beginning of the year until now, he only has been present seven times in the course of general education.

This decision was based on the underlying logic that Jowan has got enough chances and that giving him more chances, might turn out to be contraproductive for his future, as he may not draw the right lessons:

Student counselor: That is the disadvantage of the system, you know. They [the students] are counting on getting another opportunity. On a given moment they are eighteen and the National Employment Office demands that they get a job. The National Employment Office states at a certain moment: we’re sorry, but you’re out of opportunities. Then the guys go like: “Come on sir, give us just one more chance”. From that point of view, we have to acknowledge that it isn’t always that good to keep on giving chances. I think that Jowan is going to need that moment when someone draws the line and says what’s what, instead of doing a little chat and giving another opportunity.

Jowan acknowledges that the school has given him endless chances. However, he does not frame it as a contraproductive strategy at all, but rather emphasizes that this school is his last downturn base that supports him despite his irregular trail and keeps open his future

perspectives and aspirations. Although he is plus eighteen, and could look for a job on the regular labour market, in which he would earn more money than he gains with his voluntary work in the context of his training, he prefers to stay in this temporary “guard station”, as this potentially allows him to do a job that he subjectively judges as meaningful:

Jowan: Actually, I had the luck coming to this school, for thereby I still have the opportunity to be here. Any other school would have struck me off the system. Because it didn't go to well during certain periods of time. I became eighteen, I had no work for four or five months and normally you have to be deregistered after three months. How can I explain? If I quitted or if this school didn't give me this opportunity, then I would be sitting at home, behind a laptop searching for jobs. And what kind of jobs? A job that I wouldn't like at all, like working in the industry. I really wouldn't like that. I am really lucky with this school because this school takes me one step further with my future. Because you have different options with a diploma than without. You have more choices. (...) They don't give up on students. They keep on trying to give people perseverance, to make them harder. And they keep on trying to make people feel better by saying positive things. They also tell you the negative things, so that you know what has to improve. This school is just perfect, I didn't have any school that was better than this one, it really is a good school.

For the practitioners involved, however, it is a constant balancing act to formulate the necessary expectations towards Jowan, in order to create promising future perspectives (f.e. his diploma) on the one hand, and to act in situations in which Jowan does not live up to the expectations, while the main goal is still to stretch his prospects, as his practice teacher explains this ambiguous situation:

Practice teacher: Florian is now part of my class for almost three years. He has done gypsum board, he has done painting, he has done putty, he has done floor works, and he has done carpentry. So in essence, he has accomplished most of his trajectory. But he has to work to get his certificate. I would have given it to him last year, if he just had worked. Because he is quite handy. So at the end of the previous year I made an agreement with him: Jowan, it's now or never. “Yeah, yeah...” He is always filled with good intentions. But he can never fulfil those intentions as a matter of fact. He almost didn't come until January, from the start from the year until now. And from January onwards he started coming, sometimes a day in the week, sometimes not. Then he comes for two weeks in a row. Then he doesn't come for three weeks, in a manner of speaking. I can't give him a certificate like this. And I truly find that regrettable. I really find it regrettable. Why doesn't he come, just for those two days a week? He is just botching up his own opportunities. It's so damn unfortunate, but I can't keep on saying: “Yes Jowan, I will turn a blind eye to it.” No, he knew that he had to come. (...) I will give you an example. He has bought a car and he had to go to the MOT test Monday afternoon, but I didn't permit him to leave. There are plenty of other moments where he can do that. At one moment he says to me: “I have to go the trajectory counselor for a conversation about my employment”. I didn't see him back that day. He went to get dressed and of he went, for his car you know (...) He is not going to make it if he continues that way. I find it regrettable. The certificate for practice forms the basis, and then he receives a certificate for his second degree. If he doesn't get my certificate, he can't get the other. So I don't know what to do. I just find it really... If you don't give the certificate, you take away a part of his future. Because if he can do his third degree, then he is officially in order with school. But when I don't give him his certificate at the end of the year, then he has nothing. Also no public benefits. And I truly find that... We are talking about his future here. But I also can't give him his certificate as a present.

For the involved teacher, the situation became even more difficult since he lives in the same neighbourhood as Jowan. As such, he has witnessed the poor living conditions of Jowan

and his family and he realizes that a diploma is very important for both the financial situation of the family and the future perspectives of Jowan.

Practice teacher: It's a small house. They live there with six or seven. The windows are dressed with all different curtains, even with carpets. It's a sad place to live in. The front yard is filled with crap. In one word: marginal. And when I see mom and dad at the bus stop – mom doesn't speak Dutch at all, dad speaks a few words Dutch – dad tells me: "Yes we always say to Jowan: 'Go to school!'" But you have to lift him out of his bed!

Jowan's life has known a turbulent course. His family left Serbia when he was two years old. They lived in France, in Germany and since five years in Belgium. His family is – partly due to health problems – confronted with financial difficulties. His parents are declared invalid and Jowan is responsible for the income of his family. As householder of the family, he receives a living wage, provided that he does volunteer work for the Social Service Department of the town (what counts as the work component of his trajectory in the system PVEWL). The financial need was an important motivation to follow courses in the system PVEWL: *"the advantage is that in the meantime I can make money and help my parents"*. However, it did not run as smoothly as expected and he discovered that there are many different kinds of labour: underpaid labour, physically hard labour, little challenging or uplifting work, ...

Jowan: I did bridging trajectories on different places. But it all went downhill because it didn't work out as it should have done. Because I'm going to tell you, I'm a person, I like working but then I also should be treated in a way that giving and receiving are in balance, you know what I mean? And that was the problem. I experienced hard financial times and the 3.4 euros that I received were totally insufficient. That was the core of the problem. The wage that I received, was close to nothing. I was better off, as a figure of speech, hanging on the streets and extorting money from people, like some other guys do. Then you can still make like 20 euros a day, but it doesn't take you eight hours as a bridging trajectory does. So I was absent for that period. But I wasn't just sitting on my ass, I wasn't just sleeping all day, I was searching for other and better paid work, for example work in a chip stall. (...) That's my point. I wasn't able to focus just solely on my work at school or my paperwork for school. I was focusing on an income. Searching for solutions for an income. That was the problem. Earning money was just too much present in my mind. Moreover, when the atmosphere isn't good at work, then I just can't stay there. That was also a problem. You arrive there at six in the morning, and you just see all dead looks, not one look where you see a glimpse of joy or happiness. The problem is when I work together with someone that isn't happy, then I also feel fucked up. And that's just no good way to work.

Since the absences piled up, Jowan was summoned on a Monday morning in May, as it was decided on the class council that he would only get one more chance. During our interview, Jowan reflected on this meeting with his student and trajectory counselor. He expressed an absolute understanding of their expectations. In the same time, he tried to frame his considerations and explained that he is sometimes forced to set priorities. As such, he was already figuring out legitimated exit-strategies:

Jowan: Of course, we've talked about it recently, because I have been absent for a long time in the general education courses. I will tell you why. I had other things to do. Then I always chose that day because it was theory. The practice course on Monday is too important to let slide. Staying home at Wednesday, Thursday or Friday is out of the question, I have to work in the Social Service Department of our town to earn money then. But the Tuesday, that's theory, I can always catch up on theory. They

discussed it with me and told me that they really want to help me, blabla, and that they see that I want to succeed in my education and that I can succeed, but that I can't be absent no more. They said it quite literal. They told me if I was absent one more time without a doctor's note that my trajectory will have to stop. I understand that and I wouldn't have expected something else. But I take a positive stance. It also really motivates me not to be absent. Because I don't expect from those people that they will keep me on this school, giving me all those chances, showing me the way to go, without expecting something back from me. That's not how things go, you know. It has to come from both sides. They help me with me education and work, and I have to make sure that I am present when I have to be present and if I'm not I have to be able to show a doctor's note. Do you understand? I also explained it to them.

In his reporting on the meeting, he also mentioned that he had become angry, as he had the feeling that his perspective was not taken seriously by his trajectory counselor. He tried to explain how certain - at first sight irrational – decisions are in fact very deliberated from his point of view, and against the background of his everyday reality:

Jowan: They made me angry yesterday, I have to tell this honestly. Because my trajectory counselor, you probably know her, she was telling that she knew what was going on. That she know it already two to three years but that it can't stay like this. Blablabla, and then I got really angry. I am a calm person, but then I got furious. I was like: you really make me angry, now is the time to stop talking and I will tell you one more time: if I had the time and if I had nothing to do, if there were no other, more important things than theory lessons, then I wouldn't have skipped them, but I would have been here. This school is no hell to me, I don't come against my will or with displeasure. If I was coming here with displeasure, then I simply would've stopped coming. I like being on this school and if I can come, then I gladly come. But if I can't come, I can't. And a doctor's note? I can have a doctor's note every day if I want to. Then I will be permitted to be absent every single day, fine by me. So I really got angry because, coming from her mouth I got the feeling she called my stories boast. Like what I am saying comes straight out of my ass. Inventing problems in order to stay at home, that's not a normal person. Why should one show itself as bad or pathetic to another person in order to stay at home? It makes no sense at all. I would love it that things go right and that everything turns out to be fine, but nothing is perfect, you have to make it perfect. They were silent at once and they gave me room to tell my side of the story. I told them: "Look, it's no problem for me to make this agreement. If I skip another day, that my trajectory stops. I understand it and I agree, but don't talk in a way that suggests that I have been lying and that I don't make any efforts, because I do make efforts." I had to do things all by myself. Nobody helped me out, I am eighteen years mam'. I have to ensure my car on my name, so I had to look for an insurance that wanted to cover me and wanted to give me a reasonable price. (...) Those are more important things than one day of general education. Because with that car I can come to school and I can get here on time and that in return gives me strength. I don't buy a car to play macho, I buy a car to get closer to my goals. So I can work in the evening or at night. So I can help my parents with their shopping or when they are sick, I can bring them to the hospital. It's not just a financial issue, also a health issue, my parents are ill. A couple of years ago, an ambulance had to come weekly to our house and then you have to pay 75 euros each time. If we have a car, then we save on costs like that. And things can go faster then. You don't have to wait for 20 minutes until they arrive and take action. So buying a car is also for my family, not for me. If I had to choose, I would buy a moped or motorcycle. I get my motivation through the people that are close to me, I can't get it out of myself. So I'm a person who really needs somebody every day, I can't be alone.

There is a clear agreement amongst the practitioners, that the educational participation of Jowan is important to expand his future capabilities. However, there is not such a consensus about the way how to deal with his non-participation, although this intervention has also a significant impact on his capabilities, since these capabilities are embedded in a social and

material reality. In an informal conversation, the student counselor insinuated that Jowan has had enough chances and that his trajectory will stop at the next absence. His practice teacher agrees on the necessity to send out the clear message to Jowan that his trajectory cannot continue under current conditions. However, he shares a different opinion concerning the cost of exit, making reference to the everyday (material) reality of Jowan:

Practice teacher: On the class council, I mentioned that before we take the decision to strike him off the system, I want to know if he can keep his public benefits [a living wage that is linked to his voluntary work at the Social Service Department of the town]. He needs it to survive. Some colleagues are rather hard-grained in this matter, concerning deregistering students and stuff like that. But it can have grave and enormous consequences for the life of young people. We have to try to take that into account. We are only a little link in his entire life. But that little piece can make decisions that would destroy lots of things. You have to think first before you make decisions with such severe consequences. (...) Sometimes we have colleagues here who go real fast in stating: yes, that's impossible, we've helped him 23 times. But I am more like: try it again in a different way, the 24th time can turn out to be positive. You don't have to take away his income. You can't take away a chair where someone is sitting on, without putting a stool first. But you can't just pull away the chair, that's just sending them down the drain.

5. Discussion and concluding reflections

5.1 Aspirations and the capability to aspire

Through our research in the system of PVEWL, we uncovered a diversity of professional interpretations about "difficult" trajectories, based on very different problem definitions/locations/logics, which have strong implications for the everyday practices and the youngsters' trajectories, as our empirical findings show.

The analysis reveals that many professionals in the system PVEWL problematise the "difficult trajectories" in our research mainly on the level of behaviour, explaining that those youngsters are unmotivated, do not persevere and lack the basic required work attitudes. This reasoning is based on the individual functionings (what they do) and the performance (what they achieve) of the youngsters (Walker, 2005; Kjeldsen and Bonvin, 2015) and implicitly mirrors the collective idea of the "employable" student as an individual status and achievement (Lister, 1997).

However, as some professionals acknowledged, this rationale ignores the processes of meaning-making, which go beyond the observable or measurable functioning of the youngsters, but are entangled with the lifeworld situations of the youngsters as reference points (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009). Formulating the necessity of clear professional future perspectives on part of the youngsters as a condition sine qua non for a successful trajectory in the system PVEWL, fails to recognize the formation and revelation of aspirations as a socially embedded process that evolves in a context.

In line with Appadurai (2004, p. 69) we conceive the capacity to aspire as: “a navigational capacity which is nurtured by the possibility of real-world conjectures and refutations (and)... thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture and refutation”. As such, aspirations are formed in “the thick of social life” (Appadurai, 2004, p. 67) or in the “interplay between agency and social structures” (Archer, DeWitt and Wong, 2013, p. 59). This framing of aspirations “invalidates deficit notions that see a lack of aspirations as an individual failing” (Prodonovich, Perry and Taggart, 2014, p. 175). The capacity to aspire is not an individual trait, but is shaped in the complex relationship between the socio, cultural, and political context and lifeworld experiences of youngsters (Bok, 2010).

Our findings show that all the youngsters in our research – even the ones who at first sight seem unmotivated and even apathetic – aspire. However, as disadvantaged youngsters often have less opportunity and social resources (material as well as immaterial) to develop their capacity to aspire, the youngsters in the system of PVEWL often have “a more brittle horizon of aspirations” (Appadurai, 2004, p. 69). As Smyth and Wrigley (2013) argue, the capacity to aspire of disadvantaged youngsters is often truncated by life circumstances, structures and systemic forces, as extensively documented in the trajectories of the youngsters in our research. Their lifeworlds show that they often experience a lack of proper resources that support the capacity to aspire. Moreover, they ended up at the bottom of the educational cascade mechanism, which might further narrow down the range of future perspectives and alternatives and might thwart the process to realise their aspirations (Prodonovich, Perry and Taggart, 2014).

It is exactly in this context, that the professionals of the system of PVEWL intervene in the lives of the youngsters, who at first sight sometimes seem to lack aspirations. However, we follow Appadurai’s (2004) approach of aspirations as a navigational capacity, which implies the understanding that everyone aspires. As such, this “lack of aspirations” as it is problematised in the system of PVEWL should rather be understood in terms of a deviation from “a common or centralised set of aspirations to fulfil labour market predictions” (Prodonovich, Perry and Taggart, 2014, p. 179). Archer, DeWitt and Wong (2013) state that any policy or practice which fails to recognise alternate and varied aspirations that not correspond with the dominant institutional aspirations (in the system of PVEWL: the aspirations that contribute to employability), is “an unfair social enterprise”, as it advocates “individual solutions to social problems” (Bauman as cited in Prodonovich, Perry and Taggart, 2014, p. 179).

The pedagogical involvement of certain professionals in the system of PVEWL resonates in the way they recognise the aspirations of the youngsters, understanding these as socially embedded and formed through the interaction with the available social resources, even when these are not consistent with functional societal or educational expectations entrenched in the employability-discourse. In our research, we uncovered both how some educational practitioners interpret and validate the youngsters’ aspirations, and how they support them through their pedagogical practice “to imagine alternative kinds of ‘good lives’ for their futures” (Zipin, Sellar, Brennan and Gale, 2013, p. 4). In certain trajectories, the professionals stretch the aspirational horizon of youngsters, as their main concern is not to

settle the students in clear-cut trainings which prepare youngsters for a direct employment in the lower segments of the labor market, but to open up the youngsters' potential future perspectives. We observed how professionals support the youngsters to navigate their everyday life, and how they mobilized resources and support and kept "the debate on the conditions (housing, education, work, income) in which people are expected to lead a dignified existence open" (Roose and De Bie, 2003, p. 477).

5.2 Substantial freedoms of participation

Our findings show that the "difficult" trajectories (e.g. Murat, Eytan and Jowan) in the system of PVEWL are often characterized by different (and not seldom combined) ways of exit, for instance unmotivated behaviour, truancy, temporary drop out, and early school leaving (see Stevenson and Ellsworth, 2006). Those youngsters do not participate with the expected "energy" (Bonvin, 2013) or behave in a so-called non-compliant manner (Mirick, 2013).

However, when behavioural compliance of the student is an indicator of a successful trajectory, participation is narrowed down to loyalty (adaption to the system) and voice (active involvement of citizens into political decision-making processes) (Ley, 2013) and might function as an affirmative or conformist social act. Following this logic, the focal point of practices shifts to specific student behaviour/functioning and non-compliance is interpreted as unproductive or even irrational behaviour and perceived as an indicator of dis-engagement. Moreover, a lack of engagement is linked to negative performances/outcomes (Mirick, 2013).

From this outcome-based perspective, the exit of youngsters is framed as major problem and the deviant aspects of the youngsters' exit-strategies should be controlled (Jordan, 2001). As a practice teacher informed us, there are a lot of rules to counter such non-compliant behaviour: "*There are rules that sometimes force us to make decisions that I do not support. But that is legislation. You have b-codes [for illegal absence in school], k-codes [indicating unwillingness on part of the student], m-codes [for illegal absence at the workfloor].*" These practices implicitly install a range of conditions. This conditionality also resonates in the mapped cartography of the educational trajectories of many of the youngsters who ended up in the system PVEWL because of the lack of expected behaviour (i.e. non-compliance) (Mirick, 2013). As such, the cost of "exit" is very high for the youngsters, as their right on education is put under pressure.

Nevertheless, based on a process-oriented perspective, our analysis shows that exit-strategies can potentially be meaningful against the background of the everyday reality of the youngsters and within the framework of their aspirations. As such, non-compliance does not necessarily indicates a lack of engagement of the student, but might be understood as an indicator of a different understanding of the situation or the problem (Playle and Keeley, 1998). Instead of interpreting non-compliance as irrational behaviour, it might maybe uncover unreasonable demands in the context of a certain social reality.

Based on our findings, we argue that practitioners' actions are a pivotal component of the engagement process and that the responsibility for engagement should be shared between the practitioner and the student (Platt, 2012), while the use of compliance as an indicator of engagement measures engagement through the student's behaviour only, highlighting only the student's actions in this process (Mirick, 2013). The capability for education (what youngsters have reason to value in education) sets a shift from conditionality towards contradiction. Through the in-depth exploration of the trajectories of the youngsters in the system of PVEWL, we uncovered educational practices in which professionals engage with the complexity and ambiguity of the lifeworlds in which they operate and the brittle horizon of the youngsters' aspirations. This pedagogical venture might involve conflict, opposition and struggle (Roose and De Bie, 2007), and it might be impossible to formulate conclusive answers, since every answer remains incomplete and is, in a sense "just an answer that opens up new possibilities, questions and limitations" (Roose, Roets and Bouverne-De Bie, 2012, p. 1600). The pedagogical role of practitioners in the system of PVEWL involves an engagement in this educational arena of unavoidable ambivalence and contradictory processes of meaning making in which the perspective of youngsters is taken seriously. As such, professional actors in the system of PVEWL can act as conversion factors to realise the capability for education of these youngsters.

5.3 Research Methods: A methodological reflection

In an attempt to embrace youngsters' voice, many researchers have tried to capture and represent the "authentic" voice of youngsters through participatory research, aiming to produce versions of what youngsters "really say" as "facts" (Roets, Roose and De Bie, 2013). However, as Roets et al. (2013, p. 539) argue, the question is, "how far the complex interplay between individual aspirations and wider, social, economic, cultural and political structures, institutions and discourses can be seen in these representations". From our point of view, researchers whose primary aim is to represent "the real voice of youngsters" are at risk of paying too little attention to the ways in which research evolves as an activity that cannot distance itself from social, political and historical processes, evolutions and contexts that determine – what we call their socio-political research ethics (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014a). As such, we argue that participatory research is not about capturing the voice of disadvantaged youngsters (running the risk of tokenism), but about contextualizing their perspective

Therefore, we opted to situate the personal experiences of youngsters in the discursive field of practices and public issues of social structure, since these are inherently interrelated, in order to catch a more contextualized perspective of youngsters on their capability for education (Komulainen, 2007). We attempted to reconstruct the educational trajectories of youngsters through exploring the different and sometimes paradoxical discourses and views underlying the localized interactions with involved professionals in the trajectories. However, this multi-perspective research, which shifts the focus from "capturing the authentic voice of youngsters" to "a dialogue between contextualized perspectives, evolved

as a very complicated venture. Moreover, it seemed to be difficult, on several occasions, to reach the youngsters. As such, the above described ambiguity of the pedagogical practices, also resonates in the research venture, in which a continued research engagement with the complexity and uncertainty of the research process can be seen as essential.

However, while constructing a research report in order to interpret and represent the findings, we were struggling with the complexity and ambiguity of the rich research materials in which very complex insights were revealed (Roets et al., 2013). Although the representation of the trajectories is the product of entangling our empirical material with our theoretical persuasion, we are aware that the telling of a story is experimental: there is no way in which it can be interpreted in a “right” way or represented as the final truth. Our strategy of data representation is inspired by the work of Sameshima et al. (2009), who argue for the juxtaposing and re-presenting of multi-perspectives that are both in tension and in tandem with other possible interpretations, by revealing “the hybrid spaces of coupled interpretative systems, complex patterns are revealed which are not evident when researched separately” (Sameshima et al., 2009, p. 8). As Clarke (2003, p. 560) brings in, the produced perspectives “are not necessarily intended to form final analytic products. Although they may do so, a major and perhaps the major use for them is ‘opening up’ the data – interrogating them in fresh ways”. In line with Lather (2009), we argue for dialogical representational practices that reside in contradictory and constantly shifting and changing interpretations. The confluence of interpretations can create novel understandings, provoke new questions, generate innovate knowledge and enable new thinking (Sameshima et al., 2009).

Our aim is to question the obviousness of the institutional problem constructions and “Informational Basis of the Judgements in Justice” through which people learn to accept social injustice, by which the “unquestioned” becomes “questionable” (Schuyt, 1972). This relates to the possibilities of public and democratic debate with social actors in our societies about the ways in which policy and practice shape the structures and discourses that influence concrete circumstances of those disadvantaged youngsters and about the creation of solidarity and social justice (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014a). Therefore, it is of crucial importance that research guards its relation to the conditions in which the voices of social agents unfold, to enable researchers to formulate relevant implications for both policy and practice (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009).

6. Policy relevant implications

We concluded our local network analysis (Vandekinderen and Roose, 2014a) by outlining some main tensions in the system of part-time vocational education and workplace learning in Ghent. With regard to the policy implications deriving from the empirical findings of our participatory research, we want to catch up with the tension we unveiled between the formal and functional interpretation of educational success and the one hand, and more nuanced, but then still rather vague interpretations of success in the system of PVEWL.

The first, outcome-based interpretation of success in the system of PVEWL is understood in terms of qualified outcome and employment rates, or summarized, in terms of the formation of human capital and as an investment in economic development (Biesta, 2006). These outcomes – rooted in an employability discourse – are on a policy level formulated as tangible “quality measures” on the basis of which a school is accountable and gets subsidized. In this vein, the system of PVEWL has increasingly “come under the spell of an economic imperative, both at the level of policy and at the level of practice” (Biesta, 2006, p. 171), and reflects as such a widespread international trend of human capital outcomes that are currently driving educational policy (Walker, 2012). This logic of the “learning economy” (Biesta, 2006) was illustrated in our participatory research, since the trajectories of youngsters who did not meet these “quality parameters”, but rather exposed exit-strategies (unmotivated behaviour, truancy, ...), were problematized on many occasions and ended - in the worst case scenario - in an exclusion from the system of PVEWL.

However, in our research, that is embedded in the normative theoretical framework of the Capability Approach, the analytical focus enabled us to think beyond simply tracing the human capital outcomes and a logic of productivity (Walker, 2012), but shifted towards the question of the expansion of “human capability”. According to Sen (1997, p. 1959) “the former concentrates on the agency of human beings – through skills and knowledge as well as effort – in augmenting production possibilities. The latter focuses on the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have”.

From the Capability Approach, the main question about educational success, concerns: does it contribute to the freedoms of people to do and to be what they value being an doing (Walker, 2012)? Together with Sen (1999), we argue that human capital is not bad as one goal for education. We recognize the value of integration in the economic life, since a job on the labour market (and the implied financial resource) is important for people’s well-being (Sen, 1999). However, a solely functional employability focus of education, learns us nothing about the quality of education and work, whether or not people can give meaning to a situation, whether or not people’s aspirations are realised, whether or not people are treated with respect, ...

Therefore, we argue that we should define “educational success” and determine “the quality of education” according to a human capability model of educational policy, in terms of promoting and enhancing a youngster’s capabilities (Walker, 2015). We make a plea for educational policies that engage with a social justice agenda of education. Through the explicit research interest in the “capability for education”, we aimed to introduce the contextualised perspective of disadvantaged youngsters (what they have reason to value against the background of their lifeworld situations that are taken into account) into the (democratic) debate about the “agenda” of valuable education (Biesta, 2006).

Based on our research findings, we state that the main focus of education should not be on the individual adaptation of students to the – against the background of their everyday material and social reality – sometimes unreasonable economic demands (Grunwald and

Thiersch, 2009), but rather on the exploration of aspirations and realisation of their capabilities. In our research, we untangled very inspiring educational practices in which professionals engaged with the aspirational potential of youngsters and turned out to be conversion factors to realise the youngsters' capability for education. However, as outlined before, this implies a pedagogical critical space in which professionals reflexively engage with the unavoidable ambivalence and uncertaincontradictory processes, rather than a functional focus on short-term indicators of success (Mirick, 2013). In this vein, we state that learning is not a duty for which students need to take individual responsibility (Biesta, 2006), but that education is a collective, pedagogical, and political project for societies.

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Appendix

A **personal development trajectory** is defined in the Decree as a program for disadvantaged young people in difficult situations in which, through intensive individual counseling and appropriate activities, self-advisability and social functioning is raised and in which they are prepared for an employment-oriented program.

A **pre-trajectory** is a specific training and guidance module aimed at young people with inadequate attitudes and skills who do not have a clear career path yet, on the condition that the trajectory fits into an employment-oriented context.

A **bridging trajectory** is a form of employment for young people who are prepared to work, but whose work attitudes and skills need further development

(Decree Learning and Working, 2008).

CASE STUDY DENMARK

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1. Executive Summary

The report for WP 5 introduces the Danish case study and presents the research questions and research design according to the study of the youngsters' voices. Further it points to research findings with respect to youth perspectives on living in a so called disadvantaged area and their association and connection with the area and to research findings with respect to social innovation practice and processes and to the informational base which is hereby achieved.

Second part of the research findings present perspectives and discussions about the youngsters' experiences with aspirations and how family life, living situation, experience of inequality and disadvantages have an impact on aspirations and might be considered as a context for constructing aspirations. The second part presents moreover perspectives and discussions about the youngsters' experiences with participation processes and discussions about legitimate and illegitimate needs and problems as well as possibilities and degrees of participation. The process of research is linked to capabilities and with a special focus on aspirations and participation in the perspective of inequalities and disadvantages and with a focus on possibilities and barriers in young people's life. The report includes a presentation of the research methods and methodological reflections with a focus on how to study young people's life, including aspirations and the context of aspirations and form of participation.

The report concludes that projects emphasise activities that keep the youngsters in a certain orientation towards education and labour market affiliation. The young people's aspirations are characterized by wanting to obtain another position in life through education and / or financial independence with an overall purpose of being "integrated" in society. Integration is an overall goal but is defined very differently among the youngsters; the desire of integration is motivated by different conditions and needs and the youngsters are using different strategies to avoid or get out of an unwanted situation and to reach their dreams.

The various efforts and possibilities are primarily set up for individuals who are able to be social and feel comfortable in social relations or contexts and participate within this frame. On the contrary, such kind of social offers do not meet young people suffering from isolation and psychological or psychiatric illness.

Finally the report presents a range of policy recommendations with respect to the findings about young people's experiences of possibilities and barriers in their everyday life.

2. Introduction

2.1. The local area

Our approach to the local social area has been inspired by Wacquant (2000) who points out four dimensions: stigma, social and economic limitations, (coerced) spatial demarcation and (coerced) institutional demarcation. Exclusions are taking place – e.g. concerning a certain population (workers, migrants, ethnic or religious groups, etc.), facilities (hospitals, schools, shops and supermarkets, etc.) as well as activities (schools, production, housing, etc.). The three aspects may be combined in several ways. When using two further dimensions (horizontal and vertical) a social housing area can either be placed at the top or at the bottom of society, and people can be forced to live in that area or choose to live there voluntarily.

Youth living in urban areas on the Danish “ghetto list” (Regeringen, 2010;) is according to the Ministry of Social Affairs (1) Disadvantaged youth neither in job nor education (NEETs) and (2) Young ethnic minorities. We have a special focus on young mothers living in this “ghetto” area (socially disadvantaged areas) and ethnic minorities. Thereby, the geographical focus of study is in direct relation to a specific policy chosen IJJ, the key policies and the urban area in focus. The idea is to address this applying an exclusion model developed by Kronauer (1998). The policy on public housing § 61 a states that: A ghetto area is defined as a natural coherent public housing association unit, to at least 1,000 residents, which meets at least two of the following criteria:

- The proportion of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50 per cent.
- The proportion of residents aged 18-64 years who are not related to labour or education, exceed 40 per cent, calculated as the average over the last 4 years.
- Number convicted of a criminal offense, Arms Act or the Act on narcotics per. 10,000 residents aged 18 and above exceeds 270 persons, calculated as the average over the last 4 years.
- However, the current government labeled these areas as particularly exposed residential areas and extended the criteria to five, namely the proportion of 18-64 years old without relation to labour market or education exceeds 40% (average of the latest two years).
- the proportion of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50 percent.
- Number convicted of a criminal offense, Arms Act or the Act on narcotics per. 10,000 residents aged 18 and above exceeds 270 persons, calculated as the average over the last 4 years.
- the proportion of inhabitants aged 30-39 only having accomplished a basic education (the comprehensive school) exceeds 50 percent
- the average gross income who are liable to pay taxes aged 15-64 years (exclusive people in education) is less than 55 percent of the average gross income for the similar group in the region (Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2014).

2.1.1 Our focus

The material includes 10 interviews with a total of 10 young people aged 15-25 years. Of these, 5 were young women and 5 were young men. 2 of 3 women and all five men are of different ethnic background than Danish.

The young people are connected to different projects:

- The “Young Mothers Concept” in the nursery where young mothers already in pregnancy show up in the day care institution and have some supervision about the parental role in order to make them ready for the baby.
- “Domea”, a common secretariat responsible for activities under the “Social Housing Master Plan” (Boligsocial Helhedsplan), a project that aims to contribute to positive social development in Svendborg social housing areas (Jægerparken, Skovparken, Toftemarken og Byparken)(Boligsocial Helhedsplan, 2014). Other offers Anemonen (the local centre of broader social work in residential area) and Værestedet (drop-in club) are connected to the Domea project.
- “The Youth Entrance” is a new organization where all the authorities (stakeholders, departments, centers) relevant to the young people’s life, are brought together in one building. The purpose of this arrangement is to ensure that there is one single entrance to “the system” around the young people and the purpose is to increase the cooperation among these different authorities.

Of interest for the participatory research are more local stakeholders like the leader of the nursery with regard to the “Young Mothers Concept”, the resident consultants and the social worker connected to “Anemonen”.

In the report a main focus is participation (cf. Research Methods for a deeper description) which we understand in more ways. Parts of participation are made as a kind of free choice (young people decide themselves) whereas other parts are characterized as adaptation. In addition, some young people perceive their participation as coercive. They are directed at education (special offers for young unemployed) and a combination of formal/informal learning as stated related to the young mother’s project (a broader and detailed description is presented in WP 4).

3. Research questions and research design

Secondary research questions:

1. What needs and dreams do the youngsters articulate?
2. What is constructive for these dreams?
3. What opportunities as well as barriers are young people facing in their efforts to achieve their dreams in life, including; what kind of social efforts are providing the youngsters, and how do the youngsters meet these efforts?

Themes to be considered:

1. The young people's self-understanding according to their live in socially disadvantaged areas

2. The young people's experience of their environment, including the (social) system that they are participating
3. In relation to these broader themes, examining youth participation forms and grades as well as the connection between information base and aspirations.

The research is related to social justice. Social justice is concerned with the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within our society. Basically, Danish legislation emphasizes that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice. The legislation emphasizes as well that disadvantaged children and youngsters have the same rights and access to the same possibilities as their peers.

Social justice research is "research that addresses issues of social justice in the broadest sense..." (Cornelius & Harrington 2014, p. 7). Social justice research attends to problems of oppression and generates strategies for working toward their resolution. The purpose mentioned above is far more ambitious compared to what we intend to. Yet, the findings point to aspects attending the problems and their resolution.

Social justice research in our version focuses on providing a voice for the unheard. In our preparations and reflections of the case study we discussed how to take three basic principles into account, namely (1) respect for the persons involved, (2) beneficence, and (3) justice. Respect to persons, especially the young interviewees, demanded that the researchers treated the individuals as autonomous agents and maintained the principle that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection. We supposed that their expectations were: to do no harm, to maximize possible benefits, and to minimize possible risks as a reflection on beneficence. Finally, we had trouble with justice. Did we focus too much on informants who would be selected simply because of their availability? In order to answer properly the research design added three further applications: informed consent, assessment of risk and benefits, and selection of participants. Linked to informed consent we found three related challenges: disclosure of information, voluntariness, and competency. In the case of the young mother's project it became obvious that the persons involved had to be informed about the purpose of our research, what would occur during the research, the potential risks and benefits, and more. It is a truism that consent is only meaningful when it is given voluntarily and not under any form of coercion. Therefore, it is important to take factors and reasons that may influence a person's decision into consideration. We would and could not offer any monetary payment for participation, though some of the expected participants had low income. Payment occurs now and then as a motive for participation in various research projects, but our intention was to do with empowerment of young people and we thought that this process might become a very good remuneration. However, we met some problems as part of the research involved the community or perhaps better the neighborhood. We could have made a meeting in which all residents had the opportunity to get informed as well as discuss the risks and benefits of the residential area. Primarily this idea was fostered due to the fact that living in such an area often and to some extent is linked to social stigma. We discussed the problem with local agencies and institutions who advised us not to hold a general assembly since it would be time-consuming and give no guarantee of consensus.

Instead we used our time to provide potential participants with a clear statement of the possible benefits and risks of participation. First, we emphasized that there was no direct benefit to participants. Second, potential benefits (new contacts to peers, getting control over own life-space, etc.) were not overstated. More emphasis was put on risks so that participants were aware of possible negative consequences of participation. For example, personal questions (reminding participants of negative events in their lives) can be upsetting, and loss of privacy and confidentiality are always optional in such research. In this case privacy refers to the participant's right to decide what information she/he would share with others, while confidentiality refers to the researcher's obligation not to reveal information received from a participant without her/his informed consent.

Participatory research seeks to practically involve and draw from participants' experience and knowledge to support the research project. Participation can mean involving many different participants (young persons, professionals, politicians, and other stakeholders) in a broad range of activities such as the development of the project, the setting of research questions, the exact questions of the interviews, or the presentation of the findings, and so on. Participation varies according to age, status, methodology of the research, time participants can spend during the project, etc. We had to be very realist and limit participation by using consultancy with local professionals, trade unions, and tenants' organizations during some stages of the project. At a low stage participants were informed, listened to and consulted (young persons and professionals). The project also permitted a degree of direct involvement in decision-making processes (e.g. selection of interviewees). A more explicit joint involvement in decision-making was part of the setting up of workshops. However, a full decision-making process was not within range - due to financial costs and time required of the research team. To quote Braye (2000, p. 9): despite an "apparent consensus that participation is a good thing", this assumption "masks mayor differences of ideology between different interest groups". In our project it soon became obvious that professionals had other interests than young people.

In the preparations of the research fieldwork the basic ideas was to involve young people directly in collecting different kinds of data. During our contacts with the young people this option was put aside. The young people preferred to act as gatekeepers toward their peers but not as data collectors. As this became more cleared we had to change our original idea of direct involvement. In the further process we learned that some of these youngsters thought to have few possibilities of action aimed at improvement of their current life. They felt a lack of competences and a lack of overview which in turn meant that they engaged in activities and projects planned for them and decided by front level professionals and departments of the local government.

3.1 The interviews

The research design was based on collecting data via qualitative interviews. As the purpose of the research was at least partly to hear the voices of the young people we opted for qualitative interviews. On the one hand certain issues were central to the leading research question; on the other hand the informants should feel free to express their experiences, attitudes, stories, etc. The primary interest was to collect an extensive and rich amount of data within a reasonable period of time. At the same time, the interview seems to be an

adaptable and flexible method, particularly when in use with our target group. The adaptability means that the interviewer can follow up ideas, responses and investigate motives and feelings. The way in which a young responses further adds the tone of her/his voice, his/her facial expressions, etc. which is useful information, too.

But first of all, an interview can contribute to examine sensitive issues like poverty, illness, and other issues. It can also help the interviewer and the interviewee to detail and unpack personal experience, emotions, feelings, etc. Inspired by biographical interviews asking about life events and central features in lives the aim is to get an insight into family matters, schooling, values, behavior, decisions, dreams, possibilities, barriers, positioning in live, etc. We selected semi-structured interviews aiming at combining pre-planned and spontaneous questions. The spontaneous questions allowed the interviewer to follow up on answers by asking new questions. We evaluated it to be ideal for exploring a sensitive topic. In consequence, the questions asked were open-ended, allowing the interviewee to more freedom to answer, to counter-ask, etc.

From that point we did not follow the youngsters within the projects or activities; we did not observe their behavior or acting within the frame or structure of a project. We have investigated the projects and the youngsters' relations to projects through their voices and according the experience of the youngsters.

A difficulty turned up in relation to the recruitment of research participants. Concerning the professionals the contact was made at a very early stage, and the professionals at the nursery for example accepted to be an important link to the young mothers. In addition, we used a 'snowball' effect whereby one participant leads to another, and so on. In a small-scale project like ours recruiting a representative sample is not possible and it wasn't given priority. This doesn't mean that we found 'the usual suspects', since we had to avoid such bias in our recruitment. If so it would not only have been unfair or discriminatory, but also limit our capacity to fulfill our research objectives. However, on a practical level, there was a tension between our ideal criteria for participants and the available time and resources necessary for completing the research. A preliminary conclusion concerning the problems mentioned may sound: the less ambitious a project - the much more likely it will achieve its intended outcomes. This is so because participation gives the researcher lesser control, since very much lies outside our "jurisdiction".

3.2 Transcription

The transcripts of the life-world interviews with experts and the young people have been recorded digitally and later transcribed applying explicit transcription conventions chosen for all the interviews within the project in order to secure consistency in the empirical material between the different work packages (Kvale, 2012). This entails:

- 1) making the subjects anonymous in the text for publishing (research ethical concerns)
- 2) bringing the text into tabular form with categorization of the speaker (analytical concerns)
- 3) timestamps for each row in the tabular following the time in seconds of the interview (reliability)

Due to the timestamps it has been possible to raise transcript reliability between the recording and the produced text. This was done by both listening and reading the transcript when analysing the data. Due to the categorization it has been possible to make different explorative queries and analyses on the text uttered only by the interview subjects. Yet, a number of interviews have served two purposes both in relation to the macro and the meso level analysis; this procedure of data handling has furthermore made it possible to divide/aggregate the transcripts in relation to the explorative queries.

3.3 Analysis

In its essence our analysis attempts to better explain and understand the findings. The methods used for analysis are

- a. understanding: our perception of the meaning of what the interviewees said
- b. explanation: statements on participation aiming at clarifying and explaining why participation is expressed in the way it is
- c. conceptual approach: the theoretical ideas that help determine how we consider and critically assess the issues mentioned
- d. theories: suppositions to explain the matter.

The research team looked for patterns following interviews with their participants and by combining relevant literature the intention was to reflect the data.

Data were not collected before our analysis began, as we looked for a nuanced understanding which meant that the analysis was ongoing and took place alongside data collection. Data collection and analysis intertwined with one another.

After describing the interviews and then reading and re-reading the transcripts the above mentioned four points (a-d) of attention were brought in use. Trends linked to the research questions and objectives had a natural priority. The research questions were stated clearly and background information was collected. Based on our understanding we identified different answers or responses to the research questions. By eliminating answers that lacked relevance the analytical process headed for constructing a small set of generalizations and these were set into a dialogue the more formalized body of knowledge in the field (theories, models, reports, etc.).

This content analysis was combined with a thematic analysis (e.g. forms of participations, inequality, aspirations).

Various faces of participation indicate that participation is to be understood in a number of ways. How can we understand involvement in organizational, voluntary or institutional structures? A first step must be a necessary differentiation. The typology we have used draws on Siisiäinen (2014, p. 29-45). He claims that this "can be adopted to the analysis of concrete societal processes" (ibid., p. 30) and cross-tabulates two dimensions:

"the first dimension distinguishes the forms that require activeness from the actors themselves from those which do not (...) The second dimension separates those forms of involvement having a motivating agent/driving force (...) other than the actor her- or himself, from those whose interest agent *is* the actor her- or himself" (ibid.).

	Degree of activeness of the actor		
		Actor's role: active	Actor's role: passive
Motivating agent/ driving force	Actor her-/himself	Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interestedness - heterodoxa - activist movements - conscious refusal o participate - (movement) participation as self-production of the actor (collective) (and society) 	Adaptation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doxic conformism (symbolic power) - acculturation - indoctrination - involvement of users
	Other agent	Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activated participation - orthodox integration - enabling inclusion - education of the individual to become the entrepreneur of her/his own life - associations as schools of democracy or social citizenship 	Coercion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - total organizations and institutions - ascribed memberships in fundamental communities - obligatory participation, e.g. voting - certain forms of conditional support due to obligatory involvement - symbolic violence

The table is copied from Siisiäinen (2014: p. 32).

Participation is defined as "actor-generated, self-productive purposive action in which the actor (or actors) participate directed by their interest in a social field" (ibid., p. 33) and can be used as an ideal type which can be "adapted as a reflexive backdrop in the analysis of empirical cases" (ibid.).

Adaptation means that "actors take for granted, without questioning or apparent reflection on their presence or involvement in social organizations, institutions, communities or processes. This kind of presence or involvement is thus based on compliance or conformism and takes place largely without (direct) coercion. Actors' involvement in traditional kinds of

family or kin networks and neighborhood or village communities serves as an example of involvement based on compliance or conformism" (ibid., p. 35).

Coercion is by Siisiäinen not to exclude as social policies and educational policies may be part of subtle totalizing tendencies, e.g. as seen in various employment and education programmes. In our research it became evident to use ideas of totalizing and symbolic violence as ways to grasp the "invisible borders between educational persuasion, empowerment or activation, on the one hand, and symbolic violence of coercion, on the other hand, within the domains ofstate, municipal, welfare and third sector organizations and institutions" (ibid., 37).

The concept of engagement may be used to understand aims of "activating and empowering actors who are defined as passive or somehow *deficient*" by organizational, political or other agents (ibid.). Siisiäinen adds: "Activation and empowerment seem to be favored concepts in programs planned for groups perceived as *excluded* or *marginalized* or who have been evaluated as being in danger of becoming socially excluded" (ibid.).

These four ideal types are "abstractions which manifest themselves as social hybrids" (ibid., 38) meaning that the types are transformed from one type to another.

We have used these concepts to support the analysis of our empirical sources.

4. Research Findings

The aim has been to identify local stakeholders' roles and tasks (which cover professionals and local policy makers) as well as their views on youth policies in relation to innovative practices for vulnerable youth living in disadvantaged city areas in Denmark. We have basically been interested in pursuing how young people's possibilities, aspirations and demands are raised, strengthened, transformed or put aside and in what way they feel participating. The question is which aspects affect young people's possibilities and aspirations in life and more specific which authorities/approaches do affect their live.

This chapter will shed light on the context of youngster's aspirations and freedom to participate and from that perspective this chapter will form the basis of the findings and discussions in chapter 5.

First, we will present projects and activities, reflecting discourses and what kind (types) of youngsters these projects are addressing.

Second, we will shed light on family conditions according to the youngster's experience of being disadvantaged and third, how the youngsters are experience to live in a so called socially disadvantaged area and how they are related to their living area.

Finally, we will sum up on findings about the projects, family conditions and the living area within a social innovative perspective.

4.1 Types of social projects and approaches

The study of the youngsters voices are based on 10 interviews with a total of 10 young people aged 15-25 years. The young people are living in different areas of Svendborg (the social disadvantaged areas reach four different areas in Svendborg) and are connected to different projects that address different problems and needs:

With a certain focus on young people participating "The Young mothers Concept" it has been possible to grasp the young people's perspective on possibilities, wishes, participation,

information basis, etc. within a *specific* social innovation project. With a focus on young people connected to the overall “Domea” -project (The Social Housing Master Plan) and the “Youth Entrance” it has been possible to get youth perspectives within a broader frame, according to different activities and projects in daily life, including youth connected to ordinary schooling.

4.1.1 The Young Mothers Concept

The “Young Mothers Concept” in the nursery where young mothers already in pregnancy show up in the day care institution and have some supervision about the parental role in order to make them ready for the baby. Further the young mothers are receiving supervision both during the maternity leaf and during the first 6 month period for the baby in the nursery.

The aim of the concept is to observe and support young mothers and prevent a placement of the child outside home: “Basically, the girls have gained distrust of the system and the goal is to regain the girl’s confidence in the system and to improve the cooperation. The purpose is also to motivate the young girls for education and job.” (WP4) Additional the project assumed to ensure that the young mothers keep to the educational track as well as the track of a normal life situation preventing them from being a part of the social (pedagogical) system.

4.1.2 Den Boligsociale Helhedsplan (The Social Housing Master Plan)

“Domea”, a common secretariat responsible for activities under the Boligsociale Helhedsplan (Social Housing Master Plan), is a project that aims to contribute to positive social development in Svendborgs disadvantaged areas (Jægerparken, Skovparken, Toftemarken og Byparken). Some of the projects or activities within this umbrella are “Anemonen” (the local centre of broader social work in residential area placed in Skovparken and Jægermarken respectively), “Værestedet” (a drop-in club) and sports clubs as well as other activities for children and young people.

4.1.3 The Youth Entrance

“The Youth Entrance” is a new organization where all the authorities (stakeholders, departments, centers) relevant to the young people’s life, are brought together in one building. The purpose of this arrangement is to ensure that there is only one entrance to “the system” around the young people and the purpose is to increase the cooperation among these different authorities.

4.1.4 Minor, specific offers within the bigger projects

Some offers are visible and accessible within the area of young people’s everyday live. Homework support as well as small posters about pedagogical counselling, hanging on at board in the drop-in centre or references for financial advice in the stairwells, where the young people live. The efforts are also introduced by outreach work (i.e. organised by staff members from Anemonen) within the places where young people are spending time during the day or week (in the youth club, drop-in centre, sports club). The outreach work support,

for instance, vocational activities helping the young people to get a part-time job and in that connection render help to compose applications and prepare for interviews.

Overall, the projects are addressed young people with different kind of disadvantages and it is estimated that they need some extra help and support in life. The projects are addressing young mothers (single or not); young people from socially disadvantaged families; youngsters with another ethnical and cultural background dealing with both vulnerable and traumatized parents.

The projects are trying to keep youngsters in different vulnerable situations within the normal system in general and on an educational track in particular. Some of the young mothers are vulnerable because of their age and it is very important to keep the youngsters within the normal system and within the educational system and to facilitate the possibilities for the future as included citizens.

In other words; the projects or offers are addressed to children and youngsters that need some support to be more integrated in society and get out of the disadvantaged position as a stranger or social excluded; not being seen as an opponent to the society with no aspirations and no will about the future. The projects emphasise activities that keep the youngsters in a certain orientation towards education and labour market affiliation and in that way the projects and the structures are making an impact on the future aspirations about good and bad lives.

4.2 Family conditions and the experience of being disadvantaged

The young people of different migrant background are very attached to their families and spend much time with them. According to their statements the family have a very strong presence, as strong as friends and hobbies. The parents are traumatized due to their experiences with war and as refugees; as new citizens within a new national context. Most of the mothers are out of work because of this condition. The fathers are impacted by the situation as well, but most of them have unskilled jobs. Some of the families are very well educated from their homeland, but are not able to use these qualifications in Denmark. The ambitions of the youngsters are to live a different life than their parents, with economically freedom and more opportunities.

The young people's image of themselves and experiences of barriers do not correspond with the problems articulated by the professionals. The professionals emphasize descriptions of families with war trauma unable to understand the Danish codes and standards (WP4). Some issues are corresponding with the youngster's articulations but some does not seem to be the case for the families. Even that the picture of the parents according to the professionals are corresponding with the youngsters life condition, the problems of the parent do not seems to influence the integration process of their children. With references to the youngsters these conditions do not appears as barriers to participate. The youngster have the capability to follow Danish norms, trying to be (accepted as) a part of the society and have the capability to aspire. The youngsters are feeling supported by their parents to follow Danish norms and to get integrated and to get a good life with possibilities and independency by choosing school, education and job.

Some of the Danish youngsters grew up in troubled, social disadvantaged families characterised by absent parents, neglect, mental illness, and frequent moving around. Regardless the amount or degree of a troubled background they do not use very much time with their parents and are quarrelling with them. The relationship is complicated in some way and the youngsters are trying to find themselves in life and to find new positions related to their parents and own family life. None of the youngsters with a Danish background lived together with their parents. As young mothers they are trying to make their own family.

4.3 Living in a Social Residential Area

The area where the young people live appears on the so called "Ghetto-list", that is a list formulated by the Danish government in 2010 to identify socially disadvantaged areas in Denmark with the purpose of counteracting the development of parallel societies. The list has been revised and elaborated every year since 2010.

To be defined as a ghetto (from 2014 a "socially disadvantaged area") is outlined based on the amount of people with another ethnical background than Danish, the amount of people with no education or connection to the labor market, the percentage of criminals (convicted) and the average B-income among citizens in the area (Regeringen, 2010; Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2014).

Seen from outside as an outsider the area is very nice, well-kept, open and light. There is a lot of green grass and trees between low buildings (max 3 floors) including well-kept pathways and playgrounds. The area is not marked by graffiti or vandalism. The different areas connected to the "Boligsocial Helhedsplan" (Domeas Social Housing Master Plan) are located apart from each other scattered throughout a quite big area of Svendborg city, respectively in the North-Eastern part of Svendborg (Skovparken and Byparken) and in the (North) Western part (Jægermarken and Toftemarken).

The youngsters tell that the area years ago were very unsafe and full of vandalism and gangs. The troublemakers were moved from the area and into institutions or foster care. Now, some of them have returned and live in the area with children and wife, telling the youngsters of today how to behave and what not to do.

Mainly, the youngsters do not feel that they live in a ghetto and do not feel exposed or disadvantaged. The youngsters with immigrant background defined themselves unlike the group of immigrants that live in what they call "real ghettos": "We are more integrated" (interview, youngster) and they find it odd that their neighborhood is considered as a ghetto by the government: "Try to look around – you can only see expensive cars and all the kids on the road are carrying a school bag and are on their way to school ..." (interview, youngster). Regarding the youngsters a "ghetto" is a place with a lot of crime, gangs, vandalism, not safe to move around. The "real ghettos" are inhabited by so-called "Paki types", speaking "Paki language" and these "Paki types" are criminals, angry, not integrated, because of the lack of assistance in life, including help and support from home. To better understand this conversation a short amendment has to be made here: though the current government do

not use the word "ghetto", some politicians and media do. Much public dispute is using the label which in turn means that residents in such areas are blamed as media and politicians apply the same yardstick to everybody in such areas.

With a view on the area as geographically scattered it does not appear as territorially confined or institutionally encased (Wacquant, 2000) and the youngsters are not experiencing themselves as limited from the (an) outside society or from other social strata. Many of the youngsters have to move outside the area to get to school, youth clubs, sports clubs, spare time jobs, to friends, etc. and from that perspective the limits or the encasement of the area is not very clear or defined.

Another aspect is that the local school in Byparken (Hømarksskolen) was transformed into another school structure and with another target group (Nymarksskolen) resulting in a much more ethnical and social/economical differentiation among the pupils. The pupils are then mixed across ethnicity, culture, living area, social strata and status. Also the children of the young mothers (and the young mothers during the period connected to the Young Mothers Concept) are enrolled in a nursery (and kindergarten later on) together with children from other strata and from more attractive areas (single family housing areas) because some of the nurseries and kindergartens are placed on the edge of different housing areas and serve children from different areas.

These circumstances are supposed to have an impact on the experience of not being spatial or socially excluded and then isolated from an outside world (Kronauer, 1998; Wacquant, 2000) and furthermore have an impact on the experience of not being territorially stigmatized (Wacquant, 2008). The youngsters are familiar with youngsters from other cultures, living areas, with other family traditions, social positions and ways of living. These conditions may have an impact on the youngsters' capacity to adapt to or even assimilate Danish norms (even that the parents according to the professionals do not understand them and from other perspectives can be defined as socially excluded) including an impact on the capacity to aspire in accordance with the policy described aspirations about education and labour market participation.

4.3.1 Variations of associations and attachments to the area

It is possible to observe different kinds of associations to the area among the youngsters and to observe a connection between associations and the background of the youngsters.

According to the youngsters' life stories, families with another ethnical background than Danish are much related with the area. The families have no possibility to move out because of their socio-economical position, nor they do feel the desire to move. They are engaged in the community. The community is strong, as everybody knows each other. Therefore, none of the families wants to move. The youngsters from these families know that they have to move from the area to realize dreams about education and jobs. Though they do not feel it easy to leave apparently more and better possibilities in bigger cities make it meaningful and attractive.

Regarding the immigrant youngsters the families do not feel discriminated caused by living in a disadvantaged area but they feel connected to a community, safe and secure among

relatives and other immigrants; they feel at home in this community. Duyvendak (2011) has studied new *home-making practices* according to homosexuals and people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities and emphasises the meaning of participating in a community as a replace of former homes. This home-making practice is possible to observe among the immigrant families, especially the refugees. They have to make a new home and have to feel at home in another country, society and community. They have to connect themselves with a new place and with something familiar: "*When they establish homes away from home, immigrants often recreate places that look and smell, at least to a certain extent, like the places they left behind.*" (Duyvendak, 2011: 31). Duyvendak labelled this practice *the mobile home strategy*. The assumption is that the strategy for the immigrant families to feel home in Denmark is to adhere to former life and memories of their homeland and to stay in communities among other immigrants, e.g. in disadvantaged areas – or what is defined as disadvantaged areas according to the government and the surrounding society. They experience that this way of living is meaningful because they feel connected to something and make it possible to feel *at home*. The youngsters of these families are much more "modern", movable and searching, facing the necessity of being mobile in their present as well as future-orientated, following the "route" more than the "roots" (Duyvendak, 2011) to obtain more opportunities.

Young people living alone (mainly young mothers with a Danish background) do not speak much about the area. They just draw on the shoulders when you point out that "it looks nice and green outside and with lots of open sky". They do not attach great importance to the area and the place they live. They imagine that this it is only temporary, and they do not feel rooted to the place and do not dream of staying in the area. They want to move away and this expression is connected to aspirations about the future family life – with the purpose of improving the conditions and the practicalities (more space, a garden, etc.) concerning the family life. For these youngsters aspirations and dreams are not connected to the desire of status development or material goods but to family values.

These youngsters seem to have a more *immaterial* sense of home. They do not give very much attention to the place where they stay but put a lot of attention to the aspirations about family life, raising their children and creating a certain home milieu. The feeling of home is connected to the *activities* and *feelings* that occurs in the specific place - making a new way of family life, new settings – and is less connected to the specific place: "'Home' then, is more the result of home-making than the effect of the place itself." (Duyvendak, 2011: 37).

According to the youngsters' life stories and/or articulations about the life story of closely related family members, it can be observed that families with a troubled background are moving a lot and do not connect themselves to a certain place and/or area. Despite this mobility, they do not move "away from" the marginalized situation and the "movement" does not imply (represent) social mobility.

According to Wacquant (2008) territorial stigmatization, neglect of an area and the feeling of depression and social fatum among other things might block the view of the future for

the inhabitants, living in disadvantaged areas. However, the youngsters in Svendborg do not define the area or their own position within this frame. On the contrary they define the area as nice, well-kept and safe. In addition they believe in the future and in social mobility and according to the territorial stigmatization, they feel stigmatized by their appearance, but not because of their connection to the area.

Some of the youngsters (mostly) with a Danish background do not see the area as confined as well; they are moving a lot across different places (or have been moving a lot with their families across different residential areas). They do not feel stigmatized because of the area but they feel stigmatized because of their connection to the social system, e.g. the dependency of social security, and feel that this stigma is blocking for the view (of possibilities) into their future.

Living under the circumstances of so called disadvantaged areas do not necessarily stigmatize the families as disadvantaged. Under the circumstances – or maybe because of the circumstances – some families feel at home, safe, secure and familiar with the surroundings and they do not feel an urge to move.

For other families the place has no particular importance and the youngsters of these families connect “a home” with their aspiration of making a new family, based on new substantial ideas in life and of family structure and settings, including ideas about how to raise children, stay in a (long) relationship and maintain a nice family life without conflicts and social problems.

Summing up it becomes obvious that the young people living in the area are sharing aspirations with their peers living outside the area. This trend seems to be a product of the mixed groups in day care and schools as well as enculturation to 'normal' beliefs and values.

4.4 Social innovation

Social innovation was defined in a double sense. First, as a method that allows discovering new needs or new methods to fulfil unmet needs (discovering of social needs from a bottom-up or top-down approach). Second, social innovation is linked to participation, which means that in both cases (top-down or bottom-up) there should be space for local actors to express their views and make them count. Social innovation is practiced on very different levels and with both a generic and an individual purpose.

Social innovation is defined as a :“(...) combination of absence of focus on profit and the contributions from the volunteers/professionals, makes it possible to create social value. At the same time social value in certain cases can be converted to reduce economic transaction cost.” (Jensen, 2013, p. 126) and regarding the youngsters' voices it is possible to observe different processes of social innovation within these definition.

The Young Mothers Concept ensures young mothers to stay on a track of normalization, preventing further exclusion; placing their children outside home or other more extensive social interventions. This project contribute with social values for the mothers (being

accepted, respected, involved, heard and seen as well as they are able to maintain their normal everyday life) and prospectively prevent very expensive interventions cost.

The recent policy reform of social security leaves no opportunity to exit without being subjected to sanctions (economically), but according to the youngster's life stories it is possible to express your voice and cooperate with the authorities about an alternative. One of the youngsters made an exit from the educational track and raised her voice: "Everybody is talking about how I can educate myself, but no one has asked me if I want to have an education" (interview, young) and with support from the mentor the authorities (personalized in the social worker) met the youngster's appeal and by rethinking the whole situation in another way (but still within the paragraphs of legislation), a new plan was created (the example is elaborated in 5.2.4, p. 24).

Regarding the "Boligsocial Helhedsplan" (The Overall Housing Plan) for the socially disadvantaged areas in Svendborg and all the minor projects and activities under this umbrella, including the projects that "The Overall Housing Plan" is based upon, this effort is assumed to have had an certain effect on the area. According to the youngsters the area has been very conflict-ridden years ago characterized by crime, troubles and insecurity. Interventions against the troublemakers and new efforts and activities have changed this situation. Now the culture and the activities among the youngsters in the area are reflecting healthy hobbies and behavior (attending school, clubs, doing homework, sports, jobs, including voluntary work, going for a walk and having an ice cream with friend or parents, spending time with parents at home, etc.) and the youngsters seem strongly affected by their relations to family and friends as well as projects and activities in and outside the area. Some spillover effect seems to affect behavior, choices and aspiration processes. The youngsters are not broadly speaking reflecting on why they choose as they do, but through their stories it is possible to state how much it means that peers have spare time jobs and attend school and how the youngsters naturally get involved in certain activities. In this connection the smaller, outreaching projects seem to have a significant impact on the youngsters' course of life, including choices, aspirations and motivations. Moreover, the fact that the Domea project is covering different areas, placed geographically apart from each other, prerequisites that everybody has to move across geographical lines, across different housing areas, administrative and structural lines. The risk of a territorial construction and territorial stigmatization seems to be avoided and considerably diminished.

On another level a NGO-initiative may contribute to complement the examples. After the downsizing of the former shipyard in Svendborg (app. 3000 employees, not only at the shipyard, but in the city in total) the local branch of the trade union (Shipbuilders' Union) organized a club of beneficiaries of the early retirement scheme aiming at maintaining a social circle within the framework of the union. At a later stage this club decided to use their contacts to work places to help young people getting in touch with employed workers who might open a door to a job at a local factory or workshop. The club functions in terms of mentoring, networking, supporting, etc. were supposed to make a transition from education to work. The club has no account which means that the number of young people contacted and mentored by the members is simply an estimation. The figure is supposed to

be 90 young people, primarily young males who have been supported by the members of the club.

5. Discussion, review and reflection

Partly based on findings and perspectives in chapter 4, this chapter will shed light on youngsters' capacity to aspire and their freedom to participate. Transversally, the youngsters' experience of inequality and discrimination as well as the experience of being disadvantaged will be shown and discussed.

In the first section we highlight which aspirations young people do have and how these aspirations are constructed.

Second, we highlight and discuss the conditions of substantial freedom of participation, based on the youngster's experience of participation, including perspectives on conditions and forms of participation.

5.1 Aspiration

The young peoples' aspirations are characterized by wanting to obtain education and / or financial independence with an overall purpose of being "integrated" in society. Some of the young people do not want an education and are focused on home life if necessary with an unskilled job.

Integration is an overall goal but defined very differently among the youngsters. These variations stem from the fact that the desire of integration is motivated by different conditions and needs.

More *specific* inspirations are expressed like: to become a policeman, to participate in the military, to open a clothing store, becoming a nurse, pedagogue, etc.

Even though the youngsters are a little bit more unspecific in articulating their aspirations (being something within Health, Economy, Marketing) they seem to be quite focused and motivated when explaining their considerations and planning with the purpose of achieving some educational position. The focus includes considerations about useful main subjects at high school, useful hobbies and spare time jobs, ways of thinking and motivations, etc.

5.1.1 The connection between motivations and aspirations

It can be noted that young people consider dreams – the fact that you have dreams and aspirations - to be a signal of not being disadvantaged or not being "a social loser" (interview, youngster). To have dreams and combine them with will or even willpower is an important message to the surroundings and seems to give some status, whether you want something with respect to educational achievements or want something with you privat life and family.

It is possible to connect this orientation (representation) and values regarding the importance of "will" among the youngsters to the idea of the relationship between sufficient social benefits and motivation for education or taking a low paid job, represented by policies in Denmark (WP3). This policy (the reform of social security) is justified as a needed motivational intervention in order to force beneficiaries without a formal education

to get back into the educational system (WP3, p. 14). This logic emphasizes more than ever the demands of being involved and motivated and it further strengthens the connection between involvement (the will) and being normal, not poor and not disadvantaged.

From a policy perspective the motivational aspect is only emphasized and explicit, in the life phase 5) Adulthood/grounding family, where "High economic support become related to low motivation for work and education (...)" (WP3 DK, p. 19), reflecting the logic of the reform on social security. But motivation as a central factor appears among the youngsters' voices to be very important within earlier life phases.

When analysing the definition of disadvantaged youth an emphasized focus is primarily found in both WP3 and WP4 pointing out the families and the upbringing and secondarily on the achievements in school. According to the youngsters' life stories it is possible to make an identification concerning symptoms of problems in the school related to a lack of motivation and aspirations, resulting in school drop-out.

Regarding youngsters above 18 years of age, their life stories point out a connection between their current situation and the situation in the period of lower secondary education. For example, youngsters with no connection to an educational track or in conflict with educational goals and decisions did not graduate from primary school. Additionally, our research highlights an intersection between clear ideas of future aspirations - as well as ideas of what may pave the way to fulfill the dreams - and the presence of *motivation* (Turner, 1987). And it is possible as well to see a connection between unclear, blurred ideas and the lack of motivation. Youngsters with problems around the 9th grade (expressed by being tired of school, disliking the pressure, truancy, etc.) experienced great difficulties about staying in the educational track. The youngsters have vague aspirations and no motivation (neither now nor then) which implies that the youngsters do not know what to desire (educationally as well as generally) or do not know what to do to change or turn the situation and do not really know why the situation has ended up like this.

It is difficult to identify the kernel of these problems. However, we can identify links between motivation and aspirations as well as the lack of motivation and blurred aspirations within these stories. To some extent these youngsters seem to be lost in a black hole. For them it is a challenge to get back on the educational track again and to see the possibilities and feel the motivation and to connect these two dimensions.

Another point is that such problems are not only processing in the families. They also interact with and turn up in school and during educational processes and challenges.

According to the WP4 these aspects need some attention among the teachers at the schools. For example, some professionals in day care or social work believe that the teachers in school do not understand the connection between family conditions and the lack of motivation in school.

5.1.2 The context of aspirations

The young people's self-understanding and aspirations are contextually constructed. Within this perspective the self-understanding and the aspirations are constructed based on experiences of facing stigmas and inequalities and upon oppositions against unwanted life conditions. Furthermore, family background and cultural background can be observed as contexts for aspirations.

Aspirations and inequality

Although the youngsters do not necessarily experience themselves as socially vulnerable, they are struggling with barriers and inequalities not only related to their current situation but similarly to their family background and the social and cultural characteristics associated with their family.

Young people with another ethnical background than Danish feel like Danes (all are either born in Denmark or have lived most of their lives in Denmark). But they are being approached as immigrants when they move around in public, mostly because of their appearance (skin colour and dark(er) hair). This experience may change when they begin to speak, because they do not talk so called "Paki language". Also if they tell their peers that they are Muslims, they feel stigmatized, categorized as radical Muslims (terrorists or adherents of Islamic State). In general, the young people do not feel different from other young Danes - they are able to do the same things in life as their Danish peers (except from eating pork): "We are not believers, you see." (Interview, youngster). They react on being put into boxes, categorized because of their ethnicity (the look, religion) and family background. This approach to the youngsters with immigrant background is identified as inequality because the youngsters have to struggle with aspects related to their look and with prejudices against their religion and culturally background. Being treated with this kind of inequality situates the youngsters in an exposed and disadvantaged situation even if they do not feel disadvantaged. They do not connect these conditions to the case of being disadvantaged. Yet, they see their parents as disadvantaged because of the parents' experiences with war, civil war, oppressions and histories of being a refugee. The youngsters explain hereby the parents' reduced opportunities in Denmark. The children of these parents feel they have the opportunity to get some more possibilities in life. They just have to fight for it like everybody else.

The struggle is connected with stigmatizations as "immigrants", "foreigners", "not integrated", simply as somebody that do not want to be integrated, choose to be in opposition, do not want to follow the norms and be a part of the society. These stigmas represent a picture of an orientation and behaviour that is not identical to the youngster's self-understanding. In contrast, their aspirations are influenced by the desire to bridge this gap between feeling Danish, integrated, and be approached as a foreigner, not integrated and in opposition to the Danish society. In this light the circumstances become an important context for the youngster's aspirations.

Danish youngsters feel stigmatized by being a part of the system, receiving social security. They see the authorities as stigmatizing them because they do not involve or include the youngsters and do not react on the youngsters needs. The youngsters in turn react on not being involved and consulted in decision-making. They react on not having a choice, feeling forced to accept an offer, just to receive social security and not to be treated as an opponent. They react on being put into boxes categorized by their age, their parents' problems, their youth life (previous abuse, lack of education or job) and squeezed into some other boxes that do not make sense. Within this perspective, it is possible to observe the

circumstances for the youngsters' capacity to aspire, including the missing link between motivation and aspiration.

Aspirations according to family background, cultural background

The youngster's views on being disadvantaged are linked to the situation of their parents and not to the idea of own possibilities or barriers. The youngsters' aspirations and goals are influenced by their parents' situation and their parents' lack of possibilities more than the youngsters' own experiences of not having opportunities and resources. The goal is to reach a situation where they are financially independent and hereby getting more possibilities. Further, the youngsters' aspirations reflect a life situation as more "Danish", stressing that they are integrated and want to be (accepted as) a part of the Danish society on the condition of Danish norms and rules.

One group of youngsters, especially with an ethnic Danish background and with a vulnerable and marginalized family background, wants to be and live different from their family; think, feel and live differently. Another group, especially youngsters with immigrant background, construct their aspirations in relation to the picture of the situation of their parents, in particular the conditions that the parents are subjected to through their situation as foreigners, refugees, war traumatized, etc. Related to such reflections the ethnic youth do not feel disadvantaged but rather highlight problems ascribed to the family - again related to the parents life of refugees; traumatized and without the possibility to work or use previous education acquired in their home country. These problems are not related to a specific socio-economic situation stemming from intergenerational differences or being descended from their original background. Some of the immigrant families are well educated in their homeland and originally had belonged to the middle class.

Youngsters with immigrant background feel a strong attachment to their families. For example, the challenges that the family has experienced and survived make the youngsters proud and infuse them with respect as regards the family. These young people are characterized by the fact that they want to *live* differently in order to acquiring more possibilities compared to their parents. Yet, they do not disconnect or disassociate themselves from their parents. They do not see the situation of their parents as of their own making. Therefore, the youngsters describe the parents and older siblings with deep respect, love and pride: "They have been in war - they have experienced things that I never would have been able to survive" (interview, youngster about his war traumatized family).

This aspect is articulated by professionals as a problem (WP4). By the youngsters – as it appears in some way in the youngsters' narratives - the same aspect is seen as a central part of their motivation: the drive to move forward in life and "fight" for freedom, independence, possibilities. Following Turner (1987) they are forced by wants/needs that drive you forward against some projections into the future. The opportunities they pursue must also contribute to help the parents respecting what they have experienced and to provide or re-establish some kind of social position and respect.

The Danish youth also wants to do something else in life than their parents, expressed in a different way and involving some other values and orientations. Some of the Danish youngsters have had family problems for generations and they explain themselves as "a product" of it. Danish young people with a problematic family background (growing up with absent parents, experiencing neglect and mental illness,) have a more complicated relationship with the family and want to *be* different and from that perspective *live* differently from their parents. Freedom and independence is much more about dissociating from the parents, making a distance to their problems and lifestyle, but also from the parents as individuals and actors since the young people assess their own parents to be partly responsible for their problematic life and behavior. The youngsters want to be someone else and on that basis to do something else. In brief, they want to create another life than their parents.

These different articulations highlight how youngsters are constructing their aspirations. When the youngsters are talking about the future and their aspirations - when they make a "projecting into the future" (Turner, 1987) - it typically reflects a situation which is contrary to an existing situation, more specific contrary to how other people are living and/or acting (the parents, the boyfriends' family, the "Paki-types", among others). Their aspirations are based on what they do not want to become or to an unwanted situation.

Very few youngsters based their reflections and aspirations on role models or wanted situations/circumstances where they just aim to reach the same goals and positions. This is an exception and depends on situations where the parents (or other relatives) are well educated and are hard working.

Some differences concerning the young people's perspective on/and relation to their families have turned up. Based on the understanding of the differences it is obvious that different kind of relationships and values have an impact on the youngsters' aspirations. The aspirations about making a difference in life are based on various conditions and perspectives - in particular 1) with a focus on the system and the conditions around the family, contribute to aspirations about changing the life conditions; or 2) with a focus on the individuals/the actors, e.g. the family members and their attitudes and ways of managing life, contribute to aspirations about being someone else. According to this theme, various associations with the families are found. On the basis of the relationship with the family, different attitudes to life, the family and to ways of moving forward can be identified. Within this context the relation between context, motivation and aspirations has become visible.

5.2 Substantial freedom of participation

In this section, we stress the youngster's experience of participation and discuss the conditions of participation and forms/degrees of participation.

From the youngsters' perspective participation is about the young peoples' experiences of being able to dream and to achieve their dreams. As you cannot expect finding a similarity here we rather emphasize some variations in the estimation of possibilities and barriers

connected to participation.

5.2.1 Terms of participating within the projects and activities – possibilities and barriers

The specific offers as well as the more general offers/projects like clubs, drop-in centre, sports club, etc. mentioned above (in 4.3) demand young people with an outgoing life (style), who possess a degree of social skills (and social interest). Young people must be attracted to the community structure and the sense of community life in clubs and sports clubs. The various projects and possibilities are primarily invitations for individuals who are able to be social and feel comfortable in social relations or contexts and do not feel too challenged in these positions. Young isolated people suffering from anxiety or other psychological problems find it difficult to be in public spaces and among other (new) people. They experience to a greater extent a lack of offers and opportunities that contribute to the development of personal growth and skills. It is very hard for these youngsters to see themselves participate within the existing offers and see themselves within a structure like this.

Regarding the professionals considered as actors having an impact on the structure and the circumstances of the settings it matters whether the professionals have the authority to make decisions or not, including whether they are doing this as a voluntary work. According to the youngsters it is much easier to participate in activities and to feel being a part of the processes in general and in the decision making processes in particular when the professionals (or the employees) do not have the authority to make decisions. This issue has an impact on both the aim of the professionals' practice and on the attitude and approach of the professionals. The youngsters have the experience of more space and feel freer to express themselves and to participate in processes and decisions. In that connection the youngsters are especially referring to the pedagogues at the nursery within the Young Mothers Concept and to mentors or pedagogical employees connected to different projects.²¹²

5.2.2 Inequality factors experienced as barriers for participation

Even when the youngsters do not feel disadvantaged they articulate or present (directly and indirectly) some inequality and discrimination factors.

Feeling like a stranger

The young people with another ethnic background than Danish emphasize the feeling of being different from their Danish peers - to be seen as different either because of their look or their cultural /religious affiliation. They experience to be stigmatized by an identity that they do not feel they have. Most of the young people are born in Denmark or have lived in Denmark since they were babies and they do not have any experience with another way of living or with other kinds of national attachment or identification. The youngsters are

²¹² The employees do not have to be (educated as) pedagogues.

speaking fluently Danish and expressed themselves within Danish terms and values. The youngsters with another ethnical background than Danish are identified and stigmatized as:

- Muslims – embracing the idea of being fanatic; that the youngsters are not allowed to do anything; are not allowed to spend time with friends/on hobbies; are not allowed to go to parties and to get an education)
- Immigrants – embracing the idea of being a foreigner, a stranger, and opposed to Danish norms and culture; that the youngsters have any skills; are not good at anything; do not have a will; do not want to do anything (participate in society, labor market, acquiring Danish norms and standards of living, speaking Danish, etc.)

These youth do not articulate specific *barriers* of being seen and approached as an immigrant and with another religious background but express that being Danish and integrated provides more opportunities in society. They find it irritating and unfair being approached as a stranger.

Apart from articulations about the “Paki-types” from the “real ghettos” expressing the youngsters' idea of being not integrated and not Danish, they do not articulate specific *characteristics* of being or feeling Danish but through their aspirations about having an education, being economically independent, acquiring other life conditions than their parents it is possible to observe what overall conditions and characteristics they connect to the picture of being Danish. Knowing that they in some ways live differently (e.g. have a closer relationship to the family than Danish youngsters) these differences are not articulated as crucial for *not being* “Danish” or “integrated”. All in all, they feel Danish, because Denmark is their home country. They grew up in Denmark and they do not know the feeling of another life in another country with another national identity.

Even though the youngsters do not mention any specific barriers according to participate in everyday activities as well as in society in general and do not express themselves as social excluded, the stigmas about being an immigrant or a foreigner are crucial for the young peoples' aspirations in the desire to show that “this is not true”, e.g. partly showing that they are able “to do” and have a “will” and partly through financial independence and more opportunities in life. Thereby, they dissociate themselves from “the real immigrants” or “the Paki-types” - who according to the youngsters cannot or will not be integrated and participate in the society.

Psychological problems and with socially disadvantaged upbringing

Common sense about being social and outgoing is embedded in the structure of the projects, and this causes unequal conditions for young people who are struggling with mental illness and/or live in isolation in some degree. The youngsters have to live an active life in the public space, be able to look outward and/or be able, when required, to work in different, large and small, social contexts, new places and among people, which are unknown to them. This way of being social and extrovert can be considered as natural and facilitate (the feeling of) developments for people participating in schooling, educational or vocational tracks with success, but for some of the youngsters the challenge is considerable and draws on competences and skills that they do not possess or

feel difficulty to get into play because they are psychologically and socially vulnerable. They do not feel that they have mental and psychological resources to meet these challenges. Some youngsters tell that they have very limited opportunities to progress and develop, because there are very few offers that embrace needs and issues according to their psychological and social problems, including contributing to further qualifications and personal growth for the purpose of being better to manage new challenges and escape from social isolation and prevent social exclusion.

5.2.3 The issue of age

Youngsters under the age of 18, regardless of being 16 and be on maternity leave or being 16 and participate in some kind of youth education see themselves in a situation where they have much more opportunities than barriers; the energy about daily life and the future are quite positive. Young people above the age of 18, participating in the interviews, express themselves as much more vulnerable and “lost” than the youngsters under the age of 18. Age can then be assumed to be one of the issues that affect the possibilities of participating in various projects or in educational, vocational activities in general, because the amount of offers or activities are changing or reduced and additionally the situation of being a “grown up” imply new demands and approaches from the environment, including the social system. One youth mentioned that s/he has been kicked out of his education, partly because of too much truancy. Prospectively, s/he wants to continue in another educational track, but s/he has to wait half a year before s/he can be enrolled and in the meantime s/he does not know what to do. Further, s/he assesses that it is very hard to find a job or some other activity because of the age. S/He does not know what kind of help s/he needs and therefore who/where to ask, for instance for some support regarding the lack of motivation: “I just have to pull myself together” (interview, youngsters).

5.2.4 Reactions to an inadequate or disappointing system – how to manage barriers of participation

Some of the young people do not want an education and are focused on home life if necessary with an unskilled job. They do not lack aspirations or the capacity to aspire, but are rather victims of partly limited experiences of turning aspirations into favorable outcomes (Appadurai, 2004) and partly by the lack of social and psychological resources. Some of these youngsters do not want to be subjected to the political agenda with the focus on education and labor market attachment and thus the question is whether this orientation away from the track can be categorized as an exit (Hirschmann,1970). On the one hand it can be assumed that the context – e.g. previous (bad) experiences about schooling and other social activities, no educational support from home, etc. – has an impact on the constructions of the young person's aspirations and reflect an orientation away from education and labor market. Furthermore it can be assumed that the youngster has felt subjected to some structural conditions / political goals, which s/he for various reasons finds difficult to enter and pursue. The youngster makes an “exit” from the system – do not see himself as an active participant within the existing offers - and finds another way that suits to the current situation and to the extent of experienced possibilities (a kind of social innovation after all).

On the other hand the youngster keeps cooperating with the system out of mere necessity, both of economically reasons (to avoid sanctions) and also because s/he has aspirations about the future and a “will” to do something - not obeying of the political agenda, the educational track or skilled work rather developing the will to do something else, pursue other values in live, and still be a part of the society, socially included. The youngster continues to hold on to this desire, saying: "Everybody is talking about how I can educate myself, but no one has asked me if I want to have an education" (interview, young). When the youngster articulates this statement after several years of pressure from the local authorities about having an education, it turns out to be a possibility to plan a future without having an education. According to the youngster, this change in the case was possible because of the mentor support and because of a new, open minded and creative social worker having the courage to do something against conventional ideas and discourses.

5.2.5 Grades of participation - voices and rights

According to the question of: *To what extent and in what way do social policies and practices take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously?* It is possible to identify various phases or grades of participation, according to the interpretation of participation based on Siisäinen's (2014) typologies and social hybrids: Participation, Adaption, Coercion and Engagement (Jensen, 2013)

For the young people with another ethnical background than Danish, the form of participation is like a hybrid of adaption, participation and engagement. On the one hand they try to adapt a “Danish” identity - to get away from stigmas and become "completely Danish", mainly in other people’s eyes. At the same time (for that purpose) they try to follow the policy described aspirations about having an education and becoming “normal” and from that perspective adapt to values and norms connected to the idea of being Danish, integrated in society and not socially excluded. On the other hand they are participating in their own lives with an experience of voluntariness (freedom) because they - supported by their parents and inspired by their parents' life story and conditions - expect schooling and education to be of crucial importance.

This experience of meaningfulness (caused by the connection between aspiration – projections into the future (Turner, 1987) - and different factors of motivation) means that the form of participation is articulated as voluntary and the activation and empowerment (engagement) heading the young becomes meaningful and seems to be a good input in life in order to achieve their dreams and create new possibilities and more possibilities in life, i.e. “moving away” from their own marginalized position (stigmatized as immigrants) and especially from the marginalized position of their parents.

When the youngsters are not being heard and involved in decisions about their own life, the participation processes are experienced as a coercion. Conversely, while being heard and involved the youngsters felt accepted and acknowledged and the processes are experienced as voluntary participation.

For the young people with another ethnic background than Danish, the form of participation is a hybrid of adaptation, participation and engagement, because they on the one hand try to adapt a Danish identity - to get away from stigmas and become "completely Danish", aspiring for education and jobs. On the other hand they are actively participating in their own lives and experience that heading for an education is very meaningful. The youngster's experiences with stigma can be seen as a dimension of inequality and barrier that they meet but at the same time it can be seen as something that forced them to do something (to possess and get a will) and to aspire.

The following assumption was expressed in the WP3: "Disadvantaged youth would usually not have a strong voice. Formal rights do not always lead to real rights." (WP3 (DK) p. 16) and this raises the question of whose 'will' is behind the voice, similarly what are 'real rights' or 'free choices'?

The youngsters with another ethnical background than Danish are very clear about their aspirations, and their aspirations are corresponding very well with the policy described aspirations about education and job participation, including the relation between education/job and a normal life without poverty. Social service (welfare) depends upon the young people's involvement in education and training to the labour market and seen in that light this is represented as the way to be normalized, the way out of poverty and out of a life as disadvantaged. The youngsters do not articulate alternatives and stress that they really think that school and education is the solution. Following this track one might ask: is the system, the school, projects, clubs, etc. open for alternative thinking? Do they/the structure give the youngsters the opportunity to have other dreams in life? And is it desirable and advisable to have another orientation than education and labour market participation even if the youngsters are influenced by policy descriptions, ruling discourses and subjected to symbolic violence? Is it possible to find strategies more appropriate to reach the 'good life' in 'freedom' with a lot of 'possibilities'? The point is that it is very difficult to analyse the youngsters' capability according to the extent of freedom to choose between different ways of living (Sen, 1990), and what they are "in fact able to do" (Sen, 2009, p. 235). However, within the perspective of substantive freedom the youngsters are supposed to feel free; they *feel* that they have the possibility to make choices to imply social mobility and conquer new social positions in life and society. Again the question is to what extent the projects "stray" from the policy described educational track (and discourses) and on these grounds to what extent the youngsters have the freedom to choose between different ways of living?

June 8 2015 we had arranged a workshop for the participants in the Danish part of the SociEtY Project and as a part of the participatory research we confronted the professionals and a few youngsters with the findings of the WP5. According to the professionals they could not identify other goals than education and labour market participation within the existing policy descriptions or discourses. Additionally, they could not see other possible or progressive plans or goals for young people than to follow the educational track; the professionals considered education and labour market participation as the only way to get included in society and to avoid poverty, inequality and a life as disadvantaged.

5.3 Research Methods: A methodological reflection

Basically, we depart from a children's rights approach which implies adopting deliberate strategies to assist children or young people in formation of their view (Lundy and McEvoy, 2012). We have decided to use participatory approaches underpinning a commitment to accessing voice and to creating space for these voices to be heard. For those voices to have an impact it is a truism that there are ears to hear them.

"Representative democracy is not in itself enough to constitute the ear of society. When it comes to people who have become or are at risk of becoming marginalized, there is a need for extra attention. Practitioners of welfare services become the central system and social listening-post with which to hear the voice of service users. From this point of view practitioners are obliged to bring the voices that they hear forward and to support those voices so as to increase their impact" (Uggerhøj 2014, pp. 279).

Hereby, we do not say or intend to say that service users or young people are passive or incapable of acting themselves. Of course, young people take matters in their own hands to organize pressure groups and put them in action related to local or national level. It is obvious that service users' or young people's voices cannot appear solely through the employees of the same system that constitutes the power relation relative to them. When the voice comes directly from youth itself, for example, through actions directed at politicians and the media to raise awareness about poverty, bad educational conditions, or marginalization - it has a different content and a different form. The work of participation demands a differentiated perspective and the capability to hear on many levels at once. Since marginalization and participation cannot be analyzed and conceived on just one level, it should come as no surprise that our analysis directs itself at macro, meso and micro-levels.

Reflections on how to bring young voices back in political discussions and decisions also led to the option of letting young people collect utterances and viewpoints from their peers.

To work with young people as co-researchers was an adequate solution. They knew some of the gatekeepers and possessed insider knowledge that was important in order to get access to other young people. They further seemed to be more trusted by their peers than the research team. We were convinced that this would help recruiting young participants. The home base in this case was the local day care institution. Another base of recruiting young participants was made by the 'Youth Entrance' and "Domea".

We met several challenges concerning the research: Are insider and outsider perspectives difficult to balance? How to deal with power differences? How do we protect young people? How to get in contact and make appointments with the most vulnerable and isolated youngsters; how to make them interested in the project?

5.3.1 The conditions of knowledge production

When reviewing the findings and considering the research process some serious barriers have to be overcome.

First of all, as already mentioned, the recruitment of youngsters turned up to be much more difficult than expected. The day care institution and the nursery which were supposed to "deliver" access to young mothers had lost some of their contacts. Some of the mothers related to the institutions had left the residential area; others did not wish to participate or changed their minds at the last moment. This meant limitations with regard to our sample.

Secondly, we had expected to find a pipeline from the local trade union to the social club of former shipbuilders. In reality, this was not simple at all. In both cases we are aware of the problem of a narrow recruitment and as a consequence: a selective bias. We have tried to overcome the bias by completing the statements of the youngsters with other statements from social pedagogues, former shipbuilders, and other sources of information.

On beforehand, our strategy concerning ethics was clear: informed consent was a MUST. This implied a broad transfer of information not only for the youngsters, but for the various organizations who were participating one way or another, as well. We did our best to respect the social pedagogues and did not compete with them in our conversations with the youngsters. On the contrary, we had decided not to get into any discussion on what professionals had done or not done, even what they should have done, related to the youngsters. The young participants got informed that we were not part of an investigation aiming at blaming professionals. At the Youth Entrance we were advised to contact some of the young participants of their program, and as we had no other choice, we accepted the offer.

Of course, the issue of non-participation turns up. Some young people do not participate for a number of reasons.

Thirdly, it has been a success making the in-depth interviews because this approach makes it possible to identify values and context of e.g. aspirations through their life stories; conditions that it is very difficult to explain and make visible by direct questions, particularly among youngsters that is not very reflected or not used to be very reflected (yet) about questions of values, inequality, aspirations, participations, etc. It has been difficult to identify how some aspirations or dimensions of aspirations are constructed and to what extent these are really wanted or adapted.

Just one additional comment: as skilled researcher in a field where professionals are respecting research, the issue of power relations is present. One of the developmental projects in the municipality which we were invited to follow mentioned the problem of feeling being evaluated. This issue was dealt with on the spot by explaining that our research had nothing to do with measurement of effect or evaluation of outcomes, etc.

Issues like 'normativity' were not a part of our research, except for the 'normative' constraints embedded in national or local plans. The local institutions represented a balanced viewpoint - on the one hand: accept national legislation and local implementation - on the other hand: accept the young people as they are. The research supported that view. The dissemination process has not begun yet. It is scheduled to take place in Autumn 2015 and Spring 2016 - respecting the wishes of the participants.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this report has been to identify local stakeholders' role and tasks as well as their views on youth policies in relation to innovative practices for vulnerable youth living in disadvantaged city areas in Denmark. More specific the aim is to examine *“To what extent and in what way do social policies and practices take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously?”*

We have basically been interested in pursuing how young people's possibilities, wishes and demands are listened to, strengthened, transformed or put aside and in what way young people feel participating. The question is what aspects affect young people's possibilities and aspirations in life and more specific which authorities/approaches do affect their live and in what way.

The youngsters in Svendborg do not define the area as a disadvantaged area and living in the area do not block the view of a future. On the contrary they defined the area as nice, well-kept and safe and they believe in the future and in social mobility. Some youngsters and their families feel very connected to the area and feel home because of the sense of community in the area. Other youngsters are not very connected to the area and do not associate “home” with a place but with particular dreams about family life.

In general, the projects or social offers are addressed to children and youngsters that need some support to become more integrated in society and get out of a disadvantaged position; a position as a stranger being seen as an opponent to society with no aspirations and no will about the future. The projects emphasise activities that keep the youngsters in a certain orientation towards education and labour market affiliation and in that way make an impact on the future aspirations about good and bad ways to go.

The social offers as well as the more general offers like clubs, drop-in centre, sports clubs, mothers' concept, etc. are characterized by a common approach: young people are expected to “conquer the world”, e.g. live an outgoing life and possess a certain amount of social skills (and social interest and curiosity). The various efforts and possibilities are primarily set up for individuals who are able to be social and feel comfortable in social relations or contexts. On the contrary, such kind of social offers do not meet young people suffering from anxiety who find it difficult to use public spaces as well as being together with other people. In other words, these youngsters experience a lack of offers and opportunities for getting help and get into some kind of personal or social development. This is interpreted as a form of inequality and barrier. These youngsters do not feel that they get much attention within the range of projects and social offers.

The young people's aspirations are characterized by wishing to obtain another position in life through education and /or financial independence with an overall purpose of being “integrated” in society. Some of the young people do not want an education and are much more focused on home life if necessary with an unskilled job. Integration is an overall goal but is defined very differently among the youngsters; the desire of integration is motivated

by different conditions and needs and the youngsters are using different strategies to avoid or to get out of an unwanted situation and to reach their dreams.

Social policy, including projects and social offers, have strong impacts and are regulated by the overall demands for education, training and labour market participation. Young people that do not want to follow this educational track (discourse) do not have the experience of being heard or involved in different processes or within certain structures. Most of the youngsters in the study wanted to follow the educational track and experienced *and* expected that it would give a lot of possibilities to follow this pathway. Our study raises a central doubt about what is going on: Do the projects take the youngster's perspective or do they construct youngsters' aspirations through policy described aspirations and discourses? Some projects do not take the youngsters for granted - or a certain group of youngsters-perspective, because the needs, wishes and aspirations of these youngsters do not connect with the policy described aspirations about education and labour market participation.

Confronting the professionals with these findings, they do not see other possibilities for the youngsters to be included in society and to avoid inequality, poverty and a life as disadvantaged.

7. Policy relevant implications

The first step to take in order to qualify collaboration between youngsters and local governance is to involve and take youngsters' knowledge, experiences and initiatives seriously. To do this in a systematic way it is necessary to reconsider some of the methods and tools in social work and social pedagogy - for example the use of and the relationship between methods, techniques, engagement and human decency or simply combine techniques and engagement in any kind of social work and social pedagogy.

Our research shows that young people put special attention on the relationship and the pedagogue's ability to be engaged, to show human decency and to act sincere.

Youngsters are not asking politicians or professionals to become more technical, but to become more human, including serious attempt to better understand the young generation's aspirations, dreams, hopes and living conditions.

To include young people's experiences in local activities, initiatives and policies necessitates much more attention on reflection - both professional reflection between social workers, school teachers and social pedagogues and the reflection between professionals and young people. Reflection has to be part of a natural and collective part of implementing youth policies (education, housing, social policy).

As there is no explicitly defined or isolated focused youth policy area in Denmark policies are targeting a range of overlapping age groups and reasons for intervention. It is very difficult to identify and explain the reasons or definitions of specific interventions that are targeting youngsters above 18 dropped out of the educational track. Specific youth politics and policies are missing the purpose of identifying and doing interventions related to these youngsters' particular problems and needs.

A lack of interventions that meets youngsters with psychological or/and psychiatric illness, living very isolated has to be solved. A large percentage of residents in Svendborg's residential areas have mental problems which the structure and the content of the activities or interventions do not reflect. Therefore, these youngsters' are not being met in their serious needs. Compared to the amount of lonely and isolated people in the area (Boligsocial Helhedsplan, 2014) a further lack becomes apparent.

The lack of a specific youth policy reflect an idea of a homogenous group and do not take into consideration that the group of youth between 15-25 is a very diverse group of people covering different life phases, marked by different problems, challenges and needs.

These conditions, and the lack of specific policies, are reflected by the youngsters' experiences of a very rigid system with a lack of flexibility and possibilities and with a lack of opportunities and visible support when you have pasted the age of 18.

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CASE STUDY AUSTRIA: This is a Girls' Space?! Re-Searching for Participatory Parity in Gender-specific Youth Work

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

This chapter presents findings of a participative research project undertaken with girls engaged with open youth work in Simmering, one district in Vienna, Austria. Hence, the focus of the participatory and action research was put on the presence, situation and participation of young girls in open youth work and public and semi-public spaces in Simmering and the role of gender-sensitive youth work in enhancing girls' empowerment.

Research design and research questions

The case study carried out in Austria attempted to implement a participatory action research approach. It was based on four methodical elements: ethnographic methods including observant participation and informal talks in youth centers in Simmering; arts-based methods focusing on street-art; problem-centered interviews both with girls and youth workers; and three reflective sessions in terms of group discussions with stakeholders and informal talks with participants to reflect the research process. The main venue the research process was carried out was the girls' garden, a girls-only programme of a local youth centre in Simmering.

Particular research questions beyond our common research question: "In what way are young people's narratives, aspirations and conceptions of justice articulated, heard and contested in social policies and practices as well as in other aspects of their daily lives?" encompass on the one hand young girls' limit-situations revealed in their attendance of public and semi-public spaces. On the other hand, we argue about the added value of girls-only space as an important tool and resource in gender-sensitive youth work. This means to report on the challenges, limits and contestations of gender-sensitive and feminist youth work to enhance girls' scope of space appropriation and girls' capacities to aspire from the girls' perspectives and in dialogue with youth workers.

Research findings: Gendered limit-situations and the role of youth work

(1) Spaces of gendered dominance

This chapter empirically shows how girls and boys are using space in a different manner and scrutinizes underlying explanations. Girls' reduced spatial agency is contrasted to boys' expanding spatial agency that manifests itself in the way they playfully occupy public and semi-public space and in the way they communicate with each other and also intersexually.

Girls remain comparably invisible and silent in such settings – and are up to different games and used to a different division of tasks. Girls skating, playing football and boys caring for their siblings remain rather the exception.

Going out, strolling around outside appears to be a strategy of girls to escape social control by fearful parents. Teenage girls together with their female friends seem to be much more mobile over distances („strolling around“). This behaviour might be due to the restriction of possibilities in “fixed” public spaces such as parks or due to the eagerness to get out of the tyranny and control of the local. The “street or the public transport system are important spaces for being seen, for getting into contact with others, for social interaction with peer groups.

Rumors about unsafety in public space often urge girls into a defensive position having the power to create a felt space of fear that can turn into a real space of fear you use warily. At the same time, the “safe space” private home as opposite to the “unsafe public space” is actually the place where violence against children, girls and women happens. Such dominant discourses restrict girls’ (public) space appropriation.

(2) What is the value added of a girls* space? Intersectional aspects of gender-sensitive youth work

Consequently, the next chapter is arguing for spaces that girls can conquer, use and arrange on their own and gives examples for this policy. Gender-sensitive youth work aims at accompanying girls in transition processes in all possible spheres of life, trying to create free spaces and to amplify the girls’ scope of action, facilitating “identity building” and transgressing gender roles. Therefore, adequate space and methods for searching and trying out are needed, for “doing gender” and for reflecting the body as a central battlefield of gender norms. Our research shows how girls are using and that girls are appreciating a space that they can occupy for themselves. The girls’ garden is an example for such a space. It offers experiences of doing and behaving that are more difficult or impossible to accomplish in mixed settings. It is a place to act and to try out bodily experiences without reference to boys and with less heteronormative pressure. Since it is a garden, girls are not only away from home and its social control but also outside in a safe and semi-public space.

Discussion, review and reflection

(1) Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

Our research shows that the formation of aspirations is closely connected with identity formation and with realising what role is foreseen for girls and boys in a society that is strongly divided along the gendered lines of behaviour, doing and labour. Any kind of projection into the future is constrained or at least shaped by the young person’s present embeddedness in terms of his or her material, status and representative situation.

Since modern claims towards girls request to go beyond or to break with traditional gender roles, girls permanently experience “double messages” and have to cope with them: the openness and allegedly “everything goes” attitude of modern life brings along more (at least theoretical) opportunities, however daily routine and normalcy limits this alleged freedom.

In this respect, gender-sensitive youth work plays an important role for recognizing and naming contradictions in processes of identity formation and becoming. Gender-sensitive and feminist youth work aims at accompanying adolescents' processes of searching and finding with a critical perspective and with awareness of the pitfalls of normalcy. Taking seriously young people's aspirations and voice means building upon participatory knowledge, nevertheless a (contradictory) dialogue strengthens and makes visible that gendered, raced, classed and other positionalities play a role in opening up or limiting self-knowledge – and a wider range of imaginable aspirations.

(2) Substantial freedoms of participation

Contributive Justice

This report emphasizes the importance of young people's participation in terms of contribution going beyond their opinion and including their involvement into the concrete implementation of ideas. The girls' garden is an exemplary place where meaningful contributions can happen. Girls together with youth workers and other (female) visitors use the "material" in terms of "nature" and tools this place is offering. They are trying out what is seemingly not possible in other (public) or private (family) spaces, moving from capabilities to functionings in gardening and building/constructing, climbing, showing and moving their bodies – and doing graffiti in a public space.

Transformative character of participation: Underrepresentation of girls in public space and arts-based experiments

Arts-based practices and ethnographic research are fruitful methods to reach beyond explicitly and codified represented narratives. In this section, we debate in how far arts-based practices can tell us something about participants' formation of aspirations at least in small and manageable settings "for the moment". In addition, the practice of street-art is a commitment to visibility and to symbolization in public space. It involves also a commitment to public scrutiny and debate. Girls' spaces and girls-only gangs/groups in public space become symbolized via street-art as a political issue and become subject to social deliberation. Moreover, it is a public performance with respect to the symbols staying on the wall such as "Mädchengarten" ("Girls' Garden") or the girls' names.

The imperative of participation

Youth work is informal, flexible and it is evaluated in relation to its process as much as its end results. Therefore, participation is more an ends than a means to come to a certain result in youth work. At the same time, youth work is offering services, workshops, material, ideas for leisure activities etc. to consume or to take part in. If youth workers – or we as researchers – bring in ideas or issues we deem interesting, important and worthwhile discussing or working with, the non-binding nature and voluntariness of young people's participation in such plans often torpedo conceptual and long-term planning and collaboration. Many rather perceive a youth center as a place for just hanging around without an aim and a purpose than just "being" and deliberately reject participation.

(3) Methodological reflection

The Austrian case study included several methods that were combined and that to different degrees fostered an interactive process among the participants. We relied on ethnographic research and observant participation and problem-centred interviews both with young women and youth workers on the one hand. On the other hand, we attempted to implement in a collaborative process with young women and girls a project.

In terms of a methodological reflection, the participatory action research part that we tried to carry out together with girls, was very difficult to conceptualise and to implement in a participatory manner. This was due to the irregular and unpredictable presence of girls in the girls' garden and also due to their changing motivation to contribute to this process or not. In carrying out a project, some kind of structure has to be followed and a relatively steady commitment of young people to the project is a prerequisite for successful and duly participatory implementation. At the same time, the trials and errors of this process to implement an action that was at the same time part of the ethnographic field research, the permanent interaction with girls, their motivation or reluctance to contribute to our proposals or to bring in their own ideas, were necessary steps for learning about girls' positionalities and agency in semi-public spaces and the role of feminist or gender-sensitive youth work in it.

Policy-relevant conclusions

Youth work with girls and gender-sensitive youth work necessarily includes a politisation of youth work in at least two directions: First, a back-up of public policy for gender-specific / feminist / participatory youth work is crucial. It is not a separate "niche" subject of individually committed youth workers. It is a political decision, a contested field also on district level where resources are to be allotted or not.

Second, youth centers must follow a "true" commitment to enhance participatory parity between boys and girls. Time constraints and limited personnel resources jeopardise the involvement and thinking through of adequate practices on the one hand. On the other hand, the principle of gender-sensitive youth work is sometimes interpreted as a „must“ or a duty that is anyway kept in mind. The simple assertion that gender-sensitive youth work is a principle is not enough. It must be implemented and lived in daily practice, in dedicated projects, in reflection processes, and in permanent dialogue with girls and boys.

2. Introduction

2.1 Local area in focus: Simmering, Vienna

The Austrian case study is located in Simmering, the second biggest district of Vienna situated at its Eastern periphery. Simmering is a traditional working class district with a still quite heterogeneous population. Apart from the traditional working class areas, some petty-bourgeois areas can be found as well as very specific neighbourhoods such as “Macondo” where around 3.000 refugees live.

In comparison with Vienna’s overall population, Simmering has a quite young population. As for the whole of Vienna (and Austria), the district’s migrant population has risen steadily over the last years – a fact that increasingly challenges local policy and its position towards a multicultural society. In terms of educational attainment, the share of inhabitants with completed tertiary education is the lowest among all Viennese districts resp. the residents share with only compulsory education is comparably high. As lower educational attainment is known to have a negative impact on employment, it is not surprising that Simmering is among the five Viennese districts with the highest unemployment rate. Apart from unemployment, the weaker economic situation of the district’s population becomes apparent in – compared to Viennese average - lower income levels and a higher share of “needs-based minimum income” recipients (Magistrat der Stadt Wien 2014).

2.2 Selected Policy area: open youth work

Within our research we focused on the open resp. outreach youth work. Out-reach youth work and youth centres are low threshold institutions where participation is voluntary and free of cost. It particularly addresses young people from disadvantaged background with the goal to expand young people’s scope of action, supporting appropriation/negotiation of public spaces and its usage by different groups. Generally, Simmering is quite a resourceful district with regard to policies towards young people, not only in terms of “quantity” – there are more youth centres in Simmering than in any other Viennese district – but also in terms of “quality”: In Simmering, youth policies and youth programs cover a broad variety of youth work such as “traditional” youth centers, outreach/mobile youth work, special offers for children, girls (offering exclusive girls spaces), young mothers, youth work with children of refugees. Starting from this background, we focused on policies regarding gender-specific youth programs in the context of social work and youth work.

2.3 Program in focus: gender-sensitive youth work and the “girls garden”

The local youth centre “Balu&du” was the entrance point to our research area Simmering’s youth work. As we decided on a gender-specific perspective for our participatory research, the “home base” of the project was the *girls’ garden*, one of three girls’ only spaces in Simmering’s youth centre scene. It is a place open from April to September and run by Balu&du where girls and young women can meet. The girls’ garden target group are between 7 and 15 years. Besides the girls’ garden, we visited other girls-only spaces in Simmering where girls and youth workers with a gender-sensitive approach interact.

Hence, the focus of the participatory research was put on the presence, situation and participation of young girls in open youth work and public and semi-public spaces in Simmering and the role of gender-sensitive youth work in enhancing girls' empowerment.

2.4 Research strategy

The case study carried out in Austria attempted to implement a participatory action research approach. It was based on four methodical elements: ethnographic methods including observant participation and informal talks in youth centers in Simmering; arts-based methods focusing on street-art; problem-centered interviews both with girls and youth workers; and three reflective sessions in terms of group discussions with stakeholders and informal talks with participants to reflect the research process. The whole research process lasted from February 2014 to November 2014.

In the beginning, we very openly visited our gatekeeper Balu&du during the opening hours of its youth centre talking about and listening to young people's and youth workers' particular topics of interest that could become the focus of our research. At one point, we as researchers in accordance with the supporting youth workers had to take the decision where and what to focus on. Once we decided on a gender specific perspective for our participatory (action) research, we especially attended time slots exclusively for girls and girls' spaces such as the girls' garden. Within this process the involved stakeholders decided to put the focus of the participatory research on the presence, situation and participation of young girls in open youth work and public and semi-public spaces and the challenges and chances of gender-sensitive youth work in Simmering.

2.5 Themes to be discussed

Accessing the research field at a low-threshold level allowed us to broaden the research perspective and facilitated the access to a big range of "meaningful thematics" and "limit situations" that girls and young women are concerned with (Freire 2009[1970], 96, 99).

In this report themes to be discussed will on the one hand encompass young girls' limit-situations revealed in their attendance of public and semi-public spaces. On the other hand, we will argue for the added value of girls-only space as an important tool and resource in gender-sensitive youth work. This means to report on the challenges, limits and contestations of gender-sensitive and feminist youth work to enhance girls' scope of space appropriation and girls' capacities to aspire from the girls' perspectives and in dialogue with youth workers following a gender-sensitive and feminist approach in their profession.

3. Research questions and research design

The focus of the Austrian case study context was put on feminist and gender-sensitive youth work in Simmering. Bearing in mind our common research question: *“In what way are young people’s narratives, aspirations and conceptions of justice articulated, heard and contested in social policies and practices as well as in other aspects of their daily lives?”* we adapted and extended it according to the particular setting of feminist and gender-sensitive youth work. The following questions guided the research process and the interpretation of results:

- What limit-situations do girls encounter when strolling through and using public space? What is their perception of local and (semi-)public spaces that is allotted to them or that they conquer? How visible are girls in youth work? What is their position in youth work? Do we need girls-only places, and what is their benefit?
- What are girls’ perceptions of their living circumstances and girls’ narratives concerning their aspirations and identity formation processes? (Young girls’ “thematic universe” and “limit-situations”) In this respect, it is important to consider whose and what kind of experiences are told when we ask *girls* about these issues.
- Are principles of feminist girls’ work such as partisanship, the focus on the entirety of girls’ life worlds, creation of girls’ space and participation in place in today’s youth work with girls? In what way?

3.1 Gender as a crucial category in youth work

Gender represents a crucial intersectional category for youth work in many ways. By referring to Nancy Fraser’s (2004, 2009) ideas of justice as justice of redistribution, recognition and representation three considerations with respect to intersectionality pervade our research on youth work and gender inequality:

Statistical evidence proves differences with respect to many objective criteria such as income, educational attainment etc. for particular areas or particular groups of people, also for young women. It is crucial to name and “shame” inequality on the basis of distributive injustice that proves different depending on the subjects’ positions in a ‘multi-oppressive’ society. With respect to young people and gender-specific youth work it is about showing the structure of unequal attention and resources dedicated towards girls and boys; differences in girls’ and boys’ needs and attendance of public and semi-public spaces and about uncovering a normality of impediment and harassments towards girls coming along with unequal chances for girls in many aspects of life-world.

A very common policy to approach girls in youth work is to offer specific time slots exclusively for girls in youth centres as well as girls-only spaces. However, youth work with girls in an understanding that acknowledges and reaches beyond the limit-situations girls encounter in our society goes beyond solely offering girls-only space – though this is an important stake. It refers to the recognition of girls as girls in youth work, to the enhancement of girls’ presence and symbolism in youth culture and youth work and in the society as a whole (public space, language, etc). And it aims at the enhancement of equal

opportunities with respect to external conversion factors but also with respect to the recognition of female life course experiences (such as care obligations).

This means that besides the material and data-proven more or less obvious differences and inequality between male and female living circumstances (i.e. the injustice of redistribution) we also must scrutinise the reasons for impeding young people to *interact* “on par”. This inequality of recognition is due to the social status ascribed to girls and to the disrespect they are experiencing in daily life. In other words, demands for equal rights and opportunities must be acknowledged and pursued, while at the same time differences should be recognized. Gender-sensitive youth work shall facilitate rooms for experimentation to behave, act, aspire differently but it shall also offer support and foothold in girls' everyday lives and struggles (Bitzan 2010).

On top, we have to ask, how are in multiple ways disadvantaged or oppressed young people excluded from representation and participation with respect to direct and indirect, formal and informal forms of representation and participation? What steps for example through informal learning are taken to move from silence to voice also from a gender-specific perspective? Again, oppression and inequality resulting from gender norms and behaviour shall be named and uncovered. At the same time, “labelling” of girls - girls as victims or as riot girls - must be treated cautiously to avoid stigmatization and to avoid a neoliberal “everything goes” attitude (Bitzan/Daigler 2004, 207). Participatory parity evolves when limit-situations based on redistributive, status and representative inequality are collectively and not individually overcome.

With this conceptual and theoretical background, two notions were accompanying the research process in the girls' garden. First, to delve into – what Freire calls (2009[1970], 96) – people's or in our case young women's thematic universe, their meaningful thematics and their attempts to break through limit situations they encounter. For Freire limit-situations and the consciousness about them are crucial issues: they should not constitute impassable boundaries where possibilities end but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin ... a frontier which separates being from being more (surviving vs living) (99; 103). The question is how to get there. This leads us to the second notion. The apparent lack of self-confidence of many young women may be the result of social processes which render young women either invisible, or visible only as problems to be regulated. Youth workers speak about the “resources” and motivations young people and girls in particular have at their disposal, however, lacking self-esteem hinders them to voice concerns and aspirations. Self-deprivation such as calling themselves as girls ignorant and fatalism and constraints about one's aspirations and capabilities may derive from the internalization of the opinion the society as a whole holds about this particular group (Freire 2009[1970], 63). Therefore, the power of recognition as girls and of a language that is appropriate to name and address are important aspects of (youth) work with girls and young women. The movement from silence to speech, from alleged boredom to lively action, from invisibility to visibility, the collective emphasis on uncovering unjust practices and expressing valuable aspirations can turn private and individual issues into publicly discussed ones.

3.2 Research design

The participatory research design was based on four main elements: (1) ethnographic methods (Reichertz 2012) including observant participation and informal talks in youth centers in Simmering with both young people and youth workers, (2) arts-based methods, (3) problem-centered interviews both with girls and youth workers, and (4) three reflective sessions in form of group discussions with stakeholders and informal talks with participants to reflect the research process. The whole research process lasted from February 2014 to November 2014 (see Overview 2, Research Design).

According to Frisby et al (2009, 14) the combination of a participatory research process methodology and feminist theoretical concepts of gender inequality is useful to “challeng[e] and unsettl[e] entrenched and sometimes invisible power arrangements and mechanisms that are enacted in everyday relationships, organizational and economic structures, cultural and institutional practices, large and small.” Both share social change goals by indicating specifically on power manifestations resulting in (gender) inequalities that have serious consequences for people’s lives, yet are often taken for granted and seen as ‘normal or natural’.

We see participation with Cahill (2007: 299) rather as an approach than a concrete method that takes seriously young people’s/ girls agency and capacity in particular spaces. Our research design tried to combine data stemming from young people's/girls' experiential knowledge produced in arts-based workshops and sessions and from observant participation with more codified data collection from problem-centered interviews with young people and youth workers focusing on their narratives. What we could gain from this approach “despite ongoing silences [...] was at least a temporary sense of sharing in the making of spaces” (ibid.): How is young people’s, girls’ local knowledge produced? What embodied practices and experiences are emerging reaching beyond explicitly and codified represented knowledge?

- Ethnographic Research

The local youth centre Balu&du was the gatekeeper and entrance point to our research area Simmering. In the beginning of the research process, we launched a “kick-off period” for our participatory research attempts. During that period we visited and carried through informal talks both in the respective youth centre, as well as in public places, predominantly parks, where Balu&du provides out-reach youth work. Furthermore, three more youth centres in the district were approached. We visited each venue, some of them more than once, to get to know the youth workers and the young people and to collect ideas and young people’s points of interest. Once we decided on a gender-specific perspective for our participatory (action) research, we especially attended time slots exclusively for girls and girls' spaces such as the girls’ garden (run by our gatekeeper) or JAM (run by Verein Wiener Jugendzentren). From Mid of May until the End of September, we spent one afternoon per week in the girls’ garden– a space exclusively for girls and (young) women opened from spring to autumn. Therefore, we decided to put the focus of the participatory research on the presence, situation and participation of young girls in open youth work and semi-public and public spaces in Simmering and organise at least two workshops on Street-Art in the girls’ garden. In the forerun of the arts-based workshops, we tried to figure out what kind of activity

surrounding Street-Art could be interesting for the girls, also encouraged by the youth workers who recommended “going into the field” with a concrete offer. This process turned out to be quit difficult as will be explained in the section on methodological reflections.

In addition, we spent many hours in several of the districts’ parks where the outreach youth work of our gatekeeper takes place to do observant participation as well as informal walks and talks with the young people. Table 1 gives an overview of the chronology of our ethnographic research. Each visit in the girls’ garden, in another girls’ space in the research area or in another youth centre, was documented in the research diary (RD) by each researcher (starting from March 2014).

Overview 1: Chronology of ethnographic research

Where?	When?
Flugplatz (Container/out-door), run by Balu&du	April-June, three times
Zamenhofgasse (Youth centre), run by Balu&du	March-October, seven times
Mädchengarten (girls’ only garden), run by Balu&du	May-September, 14 times + 2 workshops on street-art
Si:ju (Youth centre), run by VWJZ (Verein Wiener Jugendzentren)	May, one time
Eleven (Youth centre), run by VWJZ	May-June, two times
Leberberg (Youth centre), run by VWJZ	May, one time
Jam (girls’ only youth centre), run once a week by VWJZ	June-October, three times
Out-reach youth work in parks	June-September, four times

- Arts-based methods

Batsleer (2011, 424) regards arts-based practice such as street-art as one alternative form for gathering data to express contradictory, ambivalent, multiple feelings and meanings, to try out new ideas that “have the permission also to be different and silly” and that at the same time are tools for informal learning.

Picture 1: Leaflet



As we took the decision to concentrate on street art, we dedicated the following girls garden sessions as a framework in which we were available for the girls interested in participating in the process (designing a wall just in front of the “girls’ garden”). The aim was to engage the girls as much as possible already during the preparation of the Street-Art workshop so that they can bring in their ideas and topics and decide how to depict these contents and what materials we will use. Together with the girls we designed and distributed flyers and posters to announce the workshops.

In the forerun of the two organised workshops with two Graffiti artists, the Balu&du sessions were used to introduce the girls into street-art methods such as the designing of letters and the cutting of stencils and to make them familiar with the material in use such as stencils and spray cans. In this process, the girls designed bags and tried out stencils and free-style graffiti on a huge banner.

In July and September 2014 finally two Graffiti workshops took place resulting in the design of a wall vis-à-vis the girls' garden. The initial idea – to ask together with the girls for the permission to spray the wall that is owned by the Austrian Railway Company– proved to be difficult due to the irregular attendance of the girls during the whole workshop period, and finally we as organisers of the two workshops arranged the “legalisation” of this wall.

- Problem-centered interviews both with girls and youth workers

In addition to the informal talks with girls between 13 and 20 years during our presence in the girls' garden and in the other venues, we conducted problem-centered interviews with 10 girls in order to receive more precise and targeted answers to questions surrounding the life-world of girls in Simmering's girls-only youth scene. The interviews covered questions about the girls' motivation to use girls-only space, about their use of public space, about their perceptions of “girls” identities and general questions about their living circumstances. We also conducted five problem-centered interviews with youth workers in Simmering and in another girls-only place in Vienna, the girls' café, about local and gender-sensitive youth work, attendance habits of boys and girls in youth centers and participation opportunities in processes of local policies. We also processed interviews with one female police officer and two school social workers that were conducted for the local support network analysis in WP4.

- Reflective sessions

Finally, two reflective sessions in form of group discussions with youth workers from Balu&du and informal talks and feed-back rounds with participants to reflect the research process and to conclude the whole PAR process were carried out. In addition, preliminary results of the project were presented and discussed at the “Regionalforum”, a monthly local exchange meeting of stakeholders of local youth policies including youth workers, social workers, local politicians, community organisers and school social workers.

Overview 2: Research Design

Kick-off period	Selection of focus and method involving gatekeeper (youth centre) and young people → “out-reach” and decentrally organized research work with the girls' garden as “home base “ run by Balu&du
Workshop preparation I + II	Design and distribution of flyers and posters Workshop preparation with girls: introducing them into street-art methods; designing bags and stencils Ethnographic life-world analysis (Mar-Nov 2014); continuous presence in the girls' garden, youth centers and parks; documentation and reflection in research diary
Workshops	Organisation and implementation of two workshops on Street-art with street-

		artists (July&Sept 2014)
Follow-up reflection	and	Reflective (group) discussions on participatory research design and workshop proceeding with girls, youth workers and other stake holders

4. Research Findings: Gendered limit-situations and the role of youth work

This section will shed light on “limit situations” (Freire 2009[1970], 96, 99) that young woman and girls are concerned with. By limit-situations we refer to situations that constrain aspirations or the development of capabilities and their usage in daily life. In our case study we focus on the limit-situations girls encounter in public and semi-public spaces. We scrutinize the gendered structural and discursive constraints shaping these limit-situations and how girls are “doing gender” (Gildemeister 2004). Freire interprets limit-situations as challenges: They are not impassable boundaries where possibilities end but the real boundaries where all possibilities start ... a frontier that separates being from being more (Freire 2009[1970], 99; 103). Therefore, partisan and particularly partisan girls youth work was all about signaling interest, respect and recognition and realizing possibilities and experiences that girls did not find as such in their daily lives (Bitzan 2010, 105).

The first section (spaces of gendered dominance) of this chapter will empirically show how girls and boys are using space in a different manner and scrutinize underlying explanations.

The second section (What is the value added of a girls* space? Intersectional aspects of gender-sensitive youth work) is arguing for spaces that girls can conquer, use and arrange on their own and gives examples for this policy.

Chapter 5 will build upon these findings and connect them to our common analytical dimensions: aspirations and freedoms of participation.

4.1 Spaces of gendered dominance

Young girls frequent parks and youth centers but teenage girls seem to “disappear” from certain public spaces and leisure activities. Various reasons for the “disappearance” of adolescent girls seem to be possible or to intermingle from the local stakeholder’s point of view as was laid down in the local support network analysis of SocIEtY’s WP4 (Haidinger/Kasper 2014): at the age of 14 school changes or the beginning of an apprenticeship training are common and spare time becomes scarce. In addition, attending school in a different district changes the daily routes of the girls who then might spend their spare time in different places. Besides these rather practical motivations, a more in-depth scrutiny elucidates the gendered nature of appropriating public or semi-public spaces.

Martina Löw (2001, 92) differentiates between girls’ reduced spatial agency versus boys’ expanding spatial agency. She connects the gender-specific appropriation of public space with gender-specific processes of socialization. Socialization is formed through embodied and naturalized practices within an unequal and gendered setting of division of labour and of space, resulting in a (gender-)specific habitus (Edthofer et al 2015). The expanding spatial agency of boys and particularly of adolescent boys manifests itself in the way they playfully occupy public space such as parks with football or basketball and in the way they

communicate with each other and also intersexually²¹³: painting with chalk big penises on the streets, insulting girls as whores in everyday conversations, screaming and shouting as “normal” practice of talking to each other. They are visible and present with their bodies and their voices. As one of the interviewed girls remarks: *„Yes, I sometimes do not feel in the right place when hanging around alone in parks. It's somehow boring and annoying. Then I just leave.”*²¹⁴ However, a social youth worker and another police officer pointed us to incidences of violence among girls in public space - Bitzan and Daigler (2004, 34) interpret this behavior of girls as willing to live out and show socially non-accepted behavior. *“Girls are meeting in parks in the afternoon having arranged their meetings via SMS during school time. Then they fight, pulling hair, beating, biting each other, use bodily harm against each other. They really humiliate and bully each other.”*²¹⁵

A remarkable incidence²¹⁶ happened when one of our team’s female researcher distributed flyers to announce one of the girls-only workshop in the girls’ garden. The flyers were distributed only to girls; nevertheless, boys became curious about this action and wanted to provoke and challenge it. This was done not only verbally by making fun of a girls-only event but also by physically assaulting the woman distributing the flyers and tearing the flyers apart when they got hold of them. One girl who was one of those directly addressed by the distributing action and who witnessed this incidence just remained silent and left. She did not build alliances to the boys but placed herself and was placed outside this conflict. The addressee of the aggression was the “active” researcher.

Girls remain comparably invisible and silent in these settings – and are up to different games and used to a different division of tasks: they are those playing parlour games, helping to prepare food with youth workers and they are often those who care about their siblings. As one of the youth workers during our field research noted, *„The boys are for themselves, they take their time. However, girls especially with Turkish background are often with their younger siblings, sometimes for a long time. Both of the parents are at work. Then [the girls] who are sometimes only 13, 14 have their little siblings in tow.”*²¹⁷ This gendered division of tasks also means that adolescent girls are more often met in mixed public spaces and playgrounds for children *and* young people. As an example: after the *Leberberg* park in Simmering has been reconstructed into a water playground more children and more adolescent girls showed up somehow “driving out” football playing male young people from this place. Where there are children there are less adolescent boys but more adolescent girls. As one of the youth workers observed, since the re-arrangement of this place girls seem to appear with more self-confidence and “expanding spatial agency”²¹⁸.

²¹³ Research Diary, in the following referred to as RD, pp. 35-36

²¹⁴ Int_G1 (15 years)

²¹⁵ Int_SSW, Int_PW (WP 4)

²¹⁶ RD, p.25

²¹⁷ Int_YW3

²¹⁸ Int_YW2

Often girls also “disappear” to invisible places in parks and take their positions there as spectators or audience of busy scenes such as the skate ramps or the football and basketball cage that are rather used by boys. Girls prefer uncontrollable and unreachable free places (from parents and younger children and boys) in public space for chatting and chilling and being among themselves; places that are not socially controlled. An example is the participatory planning of a girls’ zone in a park in another district than Simmering: girls formulated the wish of being invisible (from outside) and unreachable (for small children); as a result of this participatory planning process high hanging hammocks were installed.²¹⁹

“Girls,” as one girl taking part in a group discussion noted, “prefer sitting around in parks for three hours or going shopping”²²⁰. At this point, it is crucial to ask if and what alternative practices „subverting“ gendered normalcy can be identified. Of course, there are girls skating, playing football and boys caring for their siblings in fact. However, they remain rather the exception than the rule. It appears to be difficult to integrate an unusual and seemingly strange behavior into common practice and daily routine from the girls’ point of view. Here again an assessment of a 15 year old girl: „I was with my father and my [younger] brother over there in the park and some [boys] were playing football. We just asked if we could join them. This was a cool experience because then some 20 year old joined and some 11 and some 16 year old boys. This was great! So many different people played football. Football connects, you know... (...) the players did not know each other... I found this cool. I would really appreciate it if more often people But people are – so I think – too shy to ask any other people, too wary to ask, too fearful to ask. And then they rather don’t do anything but sitting around with their friends and do nothing.”²²¹ Below, we come back to the role of gender-sensitive youth work in supporting gendered practices to be turned upside down.

Space – to speak with Henri Lefebvre – has three dimensions (Lefebvre 1991, Harvey 2005: 137): a material dimension, a conceptual dimension and a dimension of lived experiences. When scrutinizing the gendered structure of space it is not enough to describe the material state of space, i.e. what factual possibilities it does provide for people staying there, or to indicate how it is used differently by girls and boys. The second (of the three dimensions), namely how space is discursively constructed, is of paramount interest as well. Why do girls feel unsafe or uncomfortable in certain places? It is due to sexual harassment in public, semi-public and private spaces, they are *experiencing* in daily lives. However, it is also due to discourses about (girls in) public spaces. Rumors about unsafety in public space often urge girls into a defensive position. A space of violence and fear is constructed when rumors about pedophiles lurking behind the trees²²² are put into circulation whereas nobody does have certain information about incidences that have happened in fact. This is a strong discourse having the power to create a felt space of fear that can turn into a real space of fear you use warily. Edthofer et al (2015, 94) give a noteworthy example of how to confront

²¹⁹ Int_YW1

²²⁰ GD Word-Up

²²¹ Int_G5 (15 years)

²²² Int_YW3

such a constructed space of fear – in this case an underground car park - by collective space appropriation of a group of girls using Wen Do techniques (feminist self-defense form) and documenting and reflecting their experiences in a comic strip. Their slogan: “we do not stay at home!”

At the same time, the “safe space” private home as opposite to the “unsafe public space” is actually the place where violence against children, girls and women happens. According to the local stakeholder interviews carried out with one police officer in charge for domestic violence and social workers in the district (WP4) barring orders spoken out in Simmering are on the rise. All of the local stakeholder interviewees being asked directly about incidences of domestic sexual violence against children indicated at least one case they came across recently.

Going out, staying in and using public spaces has something uncontrollable. One of the interviewed girls meant: *„Actually, I am not allowed to be outside all the time. My mother says I am a bad girl because I am always outside.”*²²³ Going out, strolling around outside often aims at escaping social control by fearful parents. One female youth worker herself with Turkish background told us: *“I organized a workshop starting at 7 pm let’s say and at 8 pm the Turkish girls leave though it’s scheduled until 10 pm. I ask them ,why?’ The answer was parents don’t allow us to be outside that late. Then the girls ask me, “Saida, how come that you are so free? My answer was, I can live as I want. I am already 24 years old. My parents support me in what I am and what I am doing. We [with girls] talk about this topic. You know, in Turkish families: when you are 10 [as a girl] your brother accompanies you, with 15 your cousin. There always has to be someone around who keeps an eye on you. Girls must not be harmed.”*²²⁴ Balu&du also offers girls-only activities in the neighborhood Macondo, an area where refugees live. Youth workers confirmed the difficulty to reach girls and to get parents’ permission for out-door activities, especially with overnight staying.²²⁵

Interviews with youth workers and young women made us aware of another gender-specific usage of public space: While boys rather stay in their “territory” and are reluctant to move to other districts, teenage girls together with their female friends are much more mobile over distances („strolling around“). Is this behaviour due to the restriction of possibilities in “fixed” public spaces such as parks or due to the eagerness to get out of the tyranny and control of the local? The “street” (“spazieren gehen”), the park (“abhängen”), the public transport system are important spaces for being seen, for getting into contact with others, for social interaction with peer groups. Our first publicly announced workshop on street art was actually not visited by girls who read the posters and announcements but by incidence: “We were bored, looked around, strolled around and passed by!” When being asked what she means with “strolling around”? a fifteen year old girl explained²²⁶:

²²³RD, p. 54

²²⁴Int_ YW5

²²⁵RD, p.26

²²⁶Int_ G10 (15 years)

“Just walking around. When a go for a walk with my cousin then we go out in the evening at 9 pm or so, we go for a walk, we talk, we smoke or go for a coffee to Starbucks. That's what I mean with strolling around. On weekends, we “go out” you know? But [strolling around] is much cooler than sitting around in a bar. (...) That's the way to get to know people We for instance take the metro and we go for the last stop. Then we take the way back to the first stop again. Then we take another metro. We have really lots of fun; I mean you have to be with the right partner for enjoying this. With her [cousin] I can talk about everything and it's really cool with her. (...) Once her parents were not at home and told my parents „I'll stay overnight [at the cousin's place]“. Then we were so bored and I had the idea: let's take a look at the new metro system [it was the first time when the metro ran all night long services in Vienna] on weekends. And we wanted to see how it is to go by metro all night long, so we took the metro until four o'clock in the morning.“

4.2 What is the value added of a girls* space? Intersectional aspects of gender-sensitive youth work

“Girl” is treated in this report as a political category. Referring to a collective group of authors writing about their professional experiences with feminist youth work girl* as political category can be grasped in the following way: *“If you ask girls about their horizons of experiences and you give them space, they will discover “being a girl” as a political category because they share similar and connective experiences of discrimination in daily life when they are addressed as “girls” –even though there are many more differences (of color, age, sexuality ...) that divide them.”* (Autor_innengruppe 2014, p.250, translation BH)

This is a statement referring to recent discussions in feminist and gender-sensitive youth work. The social work rhetoric and policy moved away from a victim's perspective that sees girls as an entirety as subject to male oppression to resource orientation and diversity of oppression. What different resources, backgrounds and capacities do girls bring along? What other dimensions of inequality among girls such as ethnic background, sexual orientation and identity, financial family background etc. are of importance for addressing girls? What to do in youth work with boys or girls that are not feeling as such? How are we contributing to constructing gender or to deconstructing gender as a social relationship? (Gildemeister 2004) At the same time, feminist youth work is not an individualistic approach but aims at collectivising experiences of daily life: girls shall feel safe in a collective space where their experiences are embedded in and become politicised (Autor_innengruppe 2014, p.252). At the same time, practices of feminist youth work must permanently reflect on the dialectics of being subject to oppressive structures of gender inequality and the way we are reproducing them in daily practice. This means to listen carefully to a range of experiences and reflect upon the discursive nature of these experiences. Though it is necessary taking seriously daily experiences and bothering about them you are trapped in your limit-situations when you do not succeed in reaching beyond the ‘daily’ and ‘local’.

A very common policy to address girls and their particular interests and needs is to offer specific time slots exclusively for girls in youth centres as well as girls-only spaces (BWJF 2011, 418) which are sometimes open to young mothers or women with small children too

(as women are still mainly in charge of child care). All youth centers in Simmering (and throughout Vienna) offer at least one specific time slot per week exclusively for girls. A point for discussion herewithin – not finally resolved – is how to treat the presence of girls that feel, behave, and assert oneself as boys in boys-only spaces and the other way around in girls' spaces. May girls* visit the boys* club and the other way round?

Balu&du, the youth center in Simmering we collaborated during the case study, runs a garden, which girls can access once a week from May to September. It is an intergenerational semi-public space; young mothers come with their daughters leaving them there or using the garden together. It is a kind of „extended living room“. Older women also pass by collecting vine leaves and fruits. Girls can also privately “rent” (for free) the garden. They carry the responsibility to catch the key and bring it back again; they are trusted not to invite boys to join the. Girls use the garden for birthday parties or for just “hanging around” with friends. It is a semi-public place both away from home and away from sometimes annoying spaces of the streets where “they could sit around together, have fun, joke, talk about all kinds of topics, and cultivate friendships” (Jupp 2007, 2838).

The girls' garden offers the possibility to work in the garden, harvest fruits/vegetables, to build vegetable patches, to construct new facilities for the girls' garden such as a tree house, to cook and barbecue. Youth work in this garden offers more possibilities for “bodily experiences” („leibliches Erleben“) than the regular services on offer (Palmetshofer 2010, 73,102). This is first due to the fact that it is a garden where girls and young women are outside often performing bodily work and secondly because it is a garden exclusively for girls. It is a space where girls can feel free and safe to move and show their bodies (e.g. also without headscarf) without being (consciously or without purpose) watched by boys or men.

Batsleer (2013, 22) gives some general characteristic explanations for emancipatory work with girls in girls-only spaces; what are feminist and gender-sensitive approaches in a daily youth work practice aiming at the “empowerment” of girls in many aspects of life?

The creation of free and at the same time protected spaces, protected from male assaults, from constraints of their freedom of movement, from hetero-normative dominance and for valuing female friendship, exchange among girls and support (Bitzan/Daigler 2004, 172). Not boys are the ones where attention focuses but differences and issues among the girls themselves.²²⁷

„And I think that many girls change their opinion in boys' presence“²²⁸ „Yes because they want to be liked by the boys“²²⁹

²²⁷RD, p.29

²²⁸Int_G3 (15 years)

²²⁹Int_G4 (16 years)

It is a safe space for bodily experiences and where the body can become a topic. Dancing is a favourite activity in girls' youth clubs. Beauty, bodily changes, menstruation, friendship and respect among girls as topics and problems are discussed and worked out.

„[in a girls' room] we do things that only girls are interested in; I mean it's not about make-up and stuff but discussing topics and problems that only girls have.“²³⁰

This also means, conflicts and difference among girls become more apparent, can evolve and can be argued out²³¹: *„When we are only girls then we are always fighting among us.“²³²*

It enables the creation of a safe environment in which self-confidence can develop and new skills can be tested. It enables the creation of an environment in which silences can be broken and difficult challenging questions explored. It is a place that is appreciated and defended: *„The girls really are very strict and cautious that boys do not invade their room of their own. They defended it.“²³³*

It offers a space where girls among them and in exchange with youth workers can reflect upon various transition processes and processes of identity formation and where girls' scope of action through informal learning processes can be amplified. It shall help transgressing and reflecting about unconventional gender roles and facilitating “identity building” in girls-only spaces, trying out and playing with identities.

Therefore, partisan and particularly partisan girls youth work is all about signalling interest, respect and recognition (Bitzan 2010, 105): *„One time [the girls] have something for their own. It is something precious for them and they also feel appreciated and receiving attention.“²³⁴*

²³⁰Int_G4 (16 years)

²³¹Int_G8 (17 years)

²³²Int_G5 (15 years)

²³³Int_YW3

²³⁴Int_YW2

5. Discussion, review and reflection

5.1 Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

“Empowering the disadvantaged to aspire not only implies empowering to access means of making one's heard by the powerful (voice), it also implies empowering a contribution about the contents: what is meant to be voiced as a 'good life'? How is a good life framed? To engage in contest(ing) and alter(ing) the conditions of (one's) own welfare (Appadurai, 2004; Walker, 2006) implies having some understanding of it and some idea of any desirable alternative.” (Baillergeau / Duyvendak 2013)

This section shall give answers to the question how young people frame a desirable future, beyond dreams, expectations and educational/occupational prospects. What aspirations did young people, in our case study girls, formulate or came up in another way? What are innovative practices of triggering aspirations and the motivation to think about them?

The gendered nature of aspirations and projecting oneself into the future

It is difficult to analyse aspirations or the forming of aspirations without the context they are framed. That means that “real” aspirations are impossible to grasp. Any kind of projection into the future is constrained or at least shaped by the young person’s present embeddedness in terms of his or her material, status and representative situation (Fraser 2005, 2008). Gender of course is a central category in influencing the formation of aspirations. At the same time, the teenage period is a period of rapid twists and changes with respect to the aspirations the young people have in mind. Our research showed that the formation of aspirations is closely connected with identity formation and with realising what role is foreseen for girls and boys in a society that is strongly divided along the gendered lines of behaviour, doing and labour. The self-perception of being “different”, of being “distinct” to boys and other girls mixes with the realisation that breaking out of beaten tracks of gender roles needs power and endurance. („None of my (female) friends play football or basketball in parks“). The following interview passages shows that disrespectful behaviour of boys vis-à-vis girls is condemned but also are girls (“mainstream girls”) accepting this behaviour regarded critically:

„Some [boys in our class] are really well known in the district; but they are well known on the ground of what? That you go out every weekend and that you hurt [„mainstream“] girls every weekend when you sleep with them and then you throw them away like toys. (...)”²³⁵

“Most of the girls of our age are swimming with the stream, they are behaving like and doing what is “in” at the time being. (...) You know many girls of age are smoking and going out and have boyfriends. We, my friends and myself, are not like this we have our own way of ...”²³⁶

²³⁵ Int_G4 (15 years)

²³⁶ Int_G5 (16 years)

Between 13 and 17, sexual intercourses, self-consciousness and personal or occupational projections into the future are subject to rapid twists and changes. Aspirations and projections that have been important with 14 might be completely uninteresting with 17. The completion of school with 15 is a caesura in young people's life course. Delving into the world of work with apprenticeship training or not succeeding in finding a job or an apprenticeship place has major gendered implications. Most of the girls opt for traditional women's occupations such as retail sales woman, hairdresser or office administrator with very restricted career and income prospects (Mairhuber/Papouschek 2010). Nevertheless, this move is an important step of growing up, of – especially as a girl - standing on your own feet and earning money by your own. When girls do not succeed in finding an apprenticeship place the option of staying at home, marrying and becoming a mother is widespread. Also in these cases, labour market policy is speaking about the “disappeared girls”. Those are early school leavers or NEETs who “disappear” for some years, maybe work in the family or become mothers. This leads to an underrepresentation of girls in training programmes. The research of Bacher et al. (2013) confirms that very little is known about this group.

Self-depreciation of girls concerning their capacities for higher education is common: *“We are too silly for school.”*²³⁷ One youth worker observed this development towards girls' rather conventional projection into the future: *“It's interesting how girls' attitude towards the future and life styles change between 13 and 17. Those who had different ideas in their heads with 13 turn them upside down and follow the life courses of their mothers; ready for a partner with 16 or 17 and then becoming pregnant. I often hear [of girls]: I don't care about my job prospects; I will be a mother and stay at home with my child. Perhaps from their point of view this is also a viable option: I don't want all this stress with searching for employment but I search for a husband [financially] caring for me.”*²³⁸

The book “Sternschnuppen” by Frigga Haug and Ulrike Gschwandtner (2006) analyzed 500 essays of students aged between 13 und 18 about how they see their lives in 25 years. The authors concluded that class and gender are important categories for deciding where someone projects him-/herself into the future. The essays showed that a gender-specific division of work is still in place when deciding about the professional future and implicitly with respect to the responsibility for household and care work. Though labour market participation of women was not questioned (at least on part-time basis) and girls were aspiring a juster division of labour with respect to unpaid care responsibilities between men and women, „family“ (as an idyllic phantasma, however) almost only was referred to in girls' essays, not in the boys' ones. Boys did not see themselves as part of a family in 25 years onwards in their essays.

Another interesting result of the essays' analysis was that contradictions seldom were named, a harmonious future was imagined, though a necessarily conflict driven daily life is reality. In this respect, gender-sensitive youth work plays an important role for recognizing

²³⁷ RD, p.17

²³⁸ Int_YW3

and naming contradictions in processes of identity formation and becoming. Gender-sensitive and feminist youth work aims at accompanying adolescents' processes of searching and finding with a critical perspective and with awareness of the pitfalls of normalcy. The permanent reflection of societal normalcy and social norms pushing girls into a certain direction is of paramount importance and a challenge. Supporting the formation of girls' aspirations also includes taking into account girls structural positioning in society. Batsleer (2013, 17) strengthens the fact that work with girls and young women can shift readily from an agenda concerned with challenging existing forms of power relations to an agenda essentially rooted in them whilst prompting the practise of charity. Undertaking separate work with girls does not mean automatically challenging women's subordination in society – therefore what she calls *“autonomus anti-sexist work (in contrast to separate spheres work) is based on the breaking-out of the position of women defined and categorised by their sex as persons of secondary importance”*. However, a critical stance towards the gendered division of labour cannot mean just persuading girls into technical occupations and devaluating femally connoted work such as care work. The mainstream discourse identifies those young women responsible for their place in society's unequal division of labour who opted for an unsuccessful career path. Modern claims towards girls request to go beyond or to break with traditional gender roles. Therefore, girls permanently experience “double messages” and have to cope with them: the openness and allegedly “everything goes” attitude of modern life brings along more (at least theoretical) opportunities, however daily routine and normalcy limits this alleged freedom (Bitzan/Daigler 2004, 34).

Youth work involves the conscious use of self in relation to others as a prerequisite of practice in informal settings; informal education draws strongly on personal relationship as the basis of practice. This means that youth workers' role modelling and getting into dialogue and contradictions with young people are conscious social processes in informal education including reflections about gendered behavior and a sexual division of labour. Female role models who are skating, spray-painting and rapping or having sex with women can definitely help to - at least - think about unlike trajectories of forming aspirations. At the same time, such an educational “mission” can clash with a commitment to young people's autonomy, i.e. that girls and young women have the opportunity to develop as subjects of their own lives, rather than merely as the objects of professional intervention (Batsleer 2013). A youth worker with Turkish background talks about her own experiences as a teenager with Austrian youth workers: „For us [Turkish youth] the Austrian [youth workers] were a nuisance, they want to change us. They say: speak German, German, German, German. Religion, religion, religion. They want to change us, but we do not change because we want to stay as we are.“²³⁹ Taking seriously young people's aspirations and voice means building upon participatory knowledge, nevertheless a (contradictory) dialogue strengthens and makes visible that gendered, raced, classed and other positionalities play a role in opening up or limiting self-knowledge (Dentithetal 2012, 8; Bitzan/Daigler 2004, 182)– and a wider range of imaginable aspirations.

Aspirations and arts-based experiments and practices

²³⁹ Int_YW5

Arts-based practices and ethnographic research are fruitful methods to reach beyond explicitly, codified and rationalised represented narratives. In this section, we will think about in how far arts-based practices can tell us something about participants' formation of aspirations at least in small and manageable settings "for the moment". At the same time, to speak with Janet Batsleer (2011, 424) who resumes for her participatory research based on arts-based methods with young people, "*codes of communication implicit in this practice as an artistic practice of symbolisation open up a wider range of communicative possibilities including those of advocacy, recognition and compassionate witnessing. It is when the work of the project moves into public performance that these wider possibilities emerge and the practice can be said to enter the space of democratic empowerment and potentially to engage with a struggle over symbolic capital.*" We will come back to this assessment in the next chapter when discussing aspects of the transformative character of participation with street-art practices.

Arts-based practices beyond our project of conducting two street-art workshops with girls are widespread and popular: drawing mangas²⁴⁰, designing fashion²⁴¹, writing science-fiction stories²⁴² are common practices among girls. Arts-based work give permission to play, to use your fantasy, to think about the impossible or simply to be "silly".

We consciously proposed graffiti as a particular method as rather not being a girls' domain. However, while strolling around Simmering during the research period we met girls who did have a very hearty access to making graffiti, who already took part in workshops and tried it out on the streets. When accompanying a girl in her neighbourhood she showed us tags and small graffiti that she or friends of her had made and explained what technique she was using.

Picture 2: Stencil Girl with Balloons



During the preparation of the workshops on street-art we encouraged the girls to draw, to try out different fonts and to find their "own style" of writing in block or bubble style going beyond the conventional alphabet learned in school. We encouraged them to cut stencils on their own and think about new motives besides those we have brought with us. Though, they love having motives to choose from. We also brought bags they could spray-paint with the cut stencils and that they could take home or give as present to someone.

Picture 3: Result of the first street-art workshop



In the beginning of an arts process when just sitting and turning ideas over in their minds, when consulting books or colleagues about new ideas and inspiration, the process seems to stuck: "I can't draw!" „I don't know"! „I

²⁴¹ RD, p.27

²⁴² Int_G7 (20 years); Int_G4 (15 years); Int_G5 (16 years)

don't have any idea!" Finally, the girls in one of the preparation workshops decide for the obvious to spray-paint their names or the initials of their names. This is actually a typical graffiti step: drawing your own name and putting it into public space. The wonderful aspect of graffiti is that – when you have some support of more experienced colleagues explaining basic techniques – idea, design and implementation can be carried out within three hours. The result is a presentable "oeuvre" that can make you proud of and that is visible publicly.

Picture 4: The MädchenVampirGarten Banner



Another group²⁴³ succeeded in finding a common theme to spray-paint in preparation of the "big event" to design the 10 metres long wall outside the girls' garden: *Girls vampire garden* or *girls' garden is the best (die beste)*. They tried the slogans out on a banner combining the common theme with individual motives and letters and stencils. In comparison of the two preparation workshops, it was interesting to see the differences in self-esteem. The younger girls (10-12) were much more vivid. They showed no containment, but eagerness to try out the material we brought and to implement their ideas. It was impressive to see their capability and joy in cutting with knives the stencils we prepared but they also did some simple ones (cross, hearts, balloons) by themselves. The older girls (12-14) had much more self-doubts ("No, I can't...").

The art of spray-painting seems to have some kind of "magic". Girls immediately realised what spray cans are made for: to put your mark in public space. They were immediately oriented towards outside (where graffiti anyway has to take place asking: why don't we go outside and spray-paint the wall? The wall is ugly. Let's go outside!) with their newly designed stencils. We were reluctant and wanted to wait until the "official" workshop that took place only next week together with the end-of-season party. Since this was not a "private" event but taking place under the girls garden custody we were finally "braking" this eagerness and channelled their energy towards the foreseen place, a banner to be spray-painted for this workshop. We showed them to make sketches with chalk and then using the spray can. They tried out their stencils and learned that it is not too easy to spray free-style. At some time of the afternoon a dynamic was there when the girls just wanted to use the magic cans, they spray-painted everything: the meadow, the flowers, the wood and the trees and themselves. In the beginning, the banner looked very beautiful from our point of view, but in the course of the afternoon, they started to spray-paint anything just to use this tool. Some of the girls were happy to be encouraged in trying out this new method of expressing themselves and proud about the results and the appreciation of their work by us as initiators of the workshops. It was amazing to observe what emotions and behaviour this tool, actually of male-dominated artistic practice - is triggering among the girls.

²⁴³ RD, p. 44

5.2 Substantial freedoms of participation

This section will discuss participation of young people from a subject-oriented perspective on the one hand and a more processual perspective on the other hand. This approach triggers basic questions of agency and how to achieve the real freedom to express one's aspirations, expectations and desires and make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made. Particular themes addressed: what political issues, i.e. young people's and girls' rights, needs, desires and aspirations are deemed valuable from their perspective? If and how are these issues politicized through feminist and gender-sensitive youth work? How is participation processed in this setting? How do existing inequalities impact on participation, its formal possibility and its effectiveness? And finally, how is the transformative character of participation addressed in this research?

Contributive Justice

Participation to feed concrete *policy* steps is fostered in rather institutionalized settings such as the youth parliament or within the rather short- to middle-term design processes initiated by the district's urban development agency – as was described in the Austrian report on local stakeholder support networks (Haidinger/Kasper 2014). In both, participation is possible in terms of raising demands or wishes while it stays unclear to what extent the implementation of these demands is constrained by financial and other “practical” impediments. Here, a critical point is the young people's contribution going beyond their opinion and including their involvement into the concrete implementation of ideas. In this case, participation remains rather superficial. Youth centres invest time and energy to reach young people and to include them into processes of consultation, however, the scope of decision making is very restricted. After consultation respectively “choosing” between different offers, the participation process ends, and the implementation is handed over to professionals.

As an example: a park should be designed with participation of girls to meet particularly their needs in the planning of the facilities on offer. Youth workers tried to interview through out-reach work girls and their ideas for designing a public space that is often divided only between children and boys. The children have their swings and climbing nets; the (adolescent) boys get a skate ramp or a football and basketball cage; the girls are somewhere in-between. The project aimed at particularly address girls' needs for a public space. In the end, some suggestions were taken up, for instance, a hammock that is not easily reached by children and that offers a safer and more comfortable space apart from the boys' space but at the same time gives girls the opportunity to overview the whole area. The difficulties from the engaged youth workers' point of view was to “activate” girls for formulating their interest and opinions²⁴⁴. This movement from silence to speech is a crucial point – particularly for girls who seem to disappear at a certain age from public space as was mentioned various times by our interview partners. The other deadlock was that girls are asked for their opinion but there is no sustainable strategy of keeping their interest and involve them into concrete implementation processes. Again, you are asked, give your

²⁴⁴ Int_YW1

opinion and then the pros take over. This reminds us of how justice can be perceived from the point of view of the producers and not only from users. What matters for justice from this point of view is not only the un-equal distribution of opportunities but inequalities in the availability of meaningful contribution (Gomberg 2007). An equal opportunity to contribute entails being allowed, expected and encouraged to contribute with one's skills and creativity to society in detail (the girls' garden for instance) and as a whole (Sayer 2011, 9).

The girls' garden is a place where meaningful contributions can happen. Girls together with youth workers and sometimes other adults use the "material" this place is offering. The material is nature on the one hand: the trees, the patches, the meadow are "processed". On the other hand, youth workers provide adequate tools to work with. In this combination, girls have many opportunities to contribute: they are designing and constructing the patches. They are deciding what to plant, they are planting seeds, they are watering the coming plants, they are mowing the meadow, they are weeding the vegetable patches, they are harvesting the fruits they have planted before, they are cooking with the fruits and vegetables they have harvested. Food is in any case an important material for young people. They are always asking if food is provided and have lots of fun in preparing, harvesting and eating collectively.

What is more, the girls present in the girls' garden are also contributing to longer-term projects such as the construction of a tree house or – as in our case – the designing of a wall representing the girls' garden and making it more visible. They are contributing to "their" place. They are trying out what is seemingly not possible in other (public) or private (family) spaces, moving from capabilities to functionings in gardening and building/constructing, climbing, showing and moving their bodies – and doing graffiti in a public space.

Transformative character of participation: Underrepresentation of girls in public space and arts-based experiments

In the previous sections, we described the restricted presence of girls in public spaces such as parks and in many youth cultures and habits such as graffiti as one of the three hip-hop elements (Breakdance, Rap and Graffiti) and its underlying explanations. We gave arguments for the gendered structure of aspirations and the necessity of girls-only spaces as places where girls do have other possibilities to "grow", to "behave" and to contribute as in mixed youth settings. Already in these findings, the transformative character of participating in and contributing to such a setting from a gender perspective became obvious.

The following section will elucidate in how far arts-based experiments such as graffiti even more have the power to strengthen the transformative character of participation in girls-only settings. How do girls' ideas and voices in the context of street-art emerge, become visible and find their spots? As mentioned above, Janet Batsleer (2011, 428) sees arts-based practices as projects having the power to open up a wider range of communicative possibilities "*when the work of the project moves into public performance and enter[s] the space of democratic empowerment and potentially engage[s] with a struggle over symbolic capital*".

On the one hand, we motivated voices through artistic practice *“of the moment, belonging to a pedagogy of the here-and-now”* (ibid.). New ideas and finally whole oeuvres emerged through this artistic process starting from a self-perception of many girls not being capable of drawing. It is a practice carrying the girls from alleged boredom and uneasiness to lively action, from silence to speech, from invisibility to visibility. The practice of street-art involved a commitment to risk-taking. Risk-taking with respect to ideas, fantasies, and oneself becoming visible, public and subject to deliberation when performing in public space. The girls were disappointed of not being allowed to go out on the streets for graffiti-action during the preparing sessions for the “final event” of spray-painting the wall vis-à-vis the girls’ garden. Though they appreciate this safe closed space of the girls’ garden they were absolutely up to „going out“ and conquering public space as well. This – we would argue – is a breaking through limit situations in the sense of Freire (1970) and a feminist practice of turning private issues (the restricted space appropriation of girls) into public ones.

On the other hand, the practice of street-art is a commitment to visibility and to symbolization in public space. It involves also a commitment to public scrutiny and debate. Girls’ spaces and girls-only gangs/groups in public space become symbolized through street-art. They are as a political issue made visible and become subject to social deliberation. Street-art is itself a public performance in the making when people stop and are curious to know what is happening there, and are entering a conversation or debate: „What is separate work with girls good for?“, asked one of the passer-byes. Moreover, it is a public performance with respect to the symbols staying on the wall such as “Mädchengarten” or their names. It confronts and perhaps provokes the public with political issues such as the existence and symbolization of girls’ groups and girls’ space as well as with an offensive claim for girls’ appreciation and symbolic visibility in public space.

At the same time, it was in the forerun of the project internally (among the youth workers and ourselves) discussed if the seclusion and safety of this girls-only space is threatened when a 10 meter long graffiti is spray-painted exactly vis-à-vis the girls garden and making it more visible in the sense of vulnerability. Is it important to make the place more popular? Is it necessary to do a step outside this closed venue, to go out into public space, out to the streets with a particular message? Or is this action jeopardizing the safety of this place?

The imperative of participation

Finally, we come to the issue of participatory practices and approaches in project-based youth work as a burden and imperative – both for the young people and youth workers. The attendance of youth centers and workshops offered by youth centers is voluntary and free of cost. It particularly addresses youngsters from disadvantaged background with the goal to expand young people’s scope of action, supporting appropriation/negotiation of public spaces and its usage by different groups. Participatory approach in Youth Work can be identified as a principle (Haidinger/Kasper 2014). Youth work is informal, flexible and not geared to assessment. It is evaluated in relation to its process as much as its end results. Therefore, participation is more an ends than a means to come to a certain result in youth work. At the same time, youth work is offering services, workshops, material, ideas for leisure activities etc. The rapidity of action in youth centers is often tedious, involving very

dynamic dynamics. It is hard to concentrate on one task and stay with it; permanently new impressions, new people, new wishes are present. "I am bored!"²⁴⁵ Time has to pass, what activities could be consumed?

Youth workers – or we as researchers – bring in ideas or issues we deem interesting, important and worthwhile discussing or working with. These can be "big issues" such as racism²⁴⁶ or sexism; these can also be concrete proposals such as painting a container. The non-binding and voluntariness of participation in such plans complicate conceptual and long-term planning and collaboration. If young people do not show up due to most various reasons to discuss and plan the methodological and content-related process of a particular project it is pushed forward by the professionals. This was also an issue we had to deal with in our process of conceptualizing and implementing a project on street-art in the girls' garden.

Participation does have the touch of an imperative, as one youth worker puts it: *"Often we have the impression – without the youngsters directly formulating this critique – that participating is only tedious, just work. They do not feel encouraged or taken seriously or something by "participating". It's more like: ah like in school – there I also always have to [play an active part]. (...) Sometimes they stopped us [in motivating them] and said: hey this is not school, ok? This is my spare time. I'd like to talk to you and do something with you but I don't want to be part of a project and „work on it every time I pass by."*²⁴⁷ From this perspective, a youth center must also be a place for just hanging around without an aim and a purpose than just "being".

Another aspect of the imperative of participation is that a participatory approach has to be also an issue in the youth work organization as a place of labour. How are work processes of the organization itself subject to participation? In how far are youth workers themselves motivated to arrange their daily work and organizational structure in a participatory manner? Do they want this? Or are they rather happy with doing what they are expected or what is possible. Participation is a tedious and work-intensive process often requesting particular initiatives and additional efforts; you are confronted with restrictions, external constraints such as financing, regulations, laws, having an educational mission, or an integrative mission. All these issues forced upon hamper participation. The question herein is, if the organisation itself is struggling with participation – how can you request this effort of the young people?

5.3 Research Methods: A methodological reflection

Our research case study included several methods that we combined (see section 3) and that to different degrees fostered an interactive process among the participants. We relied on ethnographic research and observant participation and problem-centred interviews both with young women and youth workers on the one hand. On the other hand, we attempted

²⁴⁵ RD, p.28

²⁴⁶ Int_YW3

²⁴⁷ Int_YW3

to implement in a collaborative process with young women and girls a project. In this latter respect, we organised Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). According to Denith et.al (2012: 3-4) this approach includes the following features: participation (researchers and participants co-conceptualizing and implementing research); reflection as collective critique (reflection on practice, relationships and interpretation); communitarian politics (change aimed at justice and satisfaction of participants); research (not only community activism) and education (skills for organizing, disseminating and fostering social change). We already laid down in the previous sections in how far change aimed at justice and satisfaction of participants, research and educational aspects were tackled by our case study on gender-sensitive youth work. Therefore, we will try to reflect upon the other two questions in the following:

Q 1: In how far did researchers and participants co-conceptualize and implement the project?

The local youth centre Balu& du was chosen as a point of access due to its low-threshold approach and the many activities offered in the district's public areas. Moreover, Balu& du commits itself to a gender sensitive approach in youth work. We entered the field of research with an approach that girls should actively participate in the conceptualisation of the idea and its implementation. They should not be "consumers but creators" (Batsleer 2013).

We struggled with the strict corset of time and methodology. The Capability Approach as a concept and its principles turned out to be extremely difficult to translate for youth workers and young people. We asked ourselves if it was ethically correct to just explain one step after the other than holding a sermon about the whole project that has so many levels: local, municipal, national, European. The young people were not at all interested in our complicated concepts. The openness of our methodological approach should help us to take up and process what we will encounter in the field.

During the YPAR, we realized that the youth centre's low- threshold approach makes continuing work with the young people respective girls quite difficult. We also had to cope with a selection bias as we had difficulties of meeting intended age group. We simply had to acknowledge that the attendance especially of young women is very unpredictable as is their motivation to contribute to theoretical and conceptual considerations about participation and graffiti. Consequently, it was difficult to initiate the project process *together* with the girls. We as initiators of the idea to spray-paint the wall outside the girls' garden with a collective graffiti took over the "active part" and also tasks that could have been done together with them (such as the process of getting a legalized graffiti wall) in order to push the process not necessarily of research but of the project. Often participation in the group and in the group's work was understood more in terms of feelings and embodied practices than of discursive processes expressing concrete proposals. For example, "feeling comfortable", "feeling bored" were terms which were often used to explain their immediate experiences in the context of our action are simply in the context of the youth club (Cahill 2007, 299). One of the main lessons learned was that girls' ideas emerge when they do something, deliberating as such „theoretically“ turned out not to be

every successful. When doing (e.g. spray-painting) they showed much more fantasy, developed ideas, became active and been motivated to realize their ideas.

As both youth (or girls') work and our youth participatory action research are on-going processes, the question of how to "frame" or "delimit" our research process (and evaluate it) became crucial. Here, the frame or succession of the necessary working steps (kick-off period, getting a legalized wall, organizing the Street Art workshop etc.) provided a certain structure that needed to stay flexible at the same time. Being dedicated as a young person to longer processes of research and deliberation is an everlasting issue in youth work and hard to accomplish. From the youth workers side they were curious if we „succeeded" in what they have been trying for so long.

Q 2: reflection on practice, relationships and interpretation

Here, we want to point out the (sometimes) challenging role of being a researcher within a youth work setting. Many times, young people (or parents) perceived us as youth workers; trying to clarify who we are (and what our intentions are) often seemed to be of no interest to them. We adapted to certain pedagogical behaviour such as "should we do ...", "would you like to do..." and being very attentive to the social dynamics of the space. However, we also wanted to delimit us from a social pedagogical mandate, as we did not "educate" girls or remind them of the rules of the girls' garden²⁴⁸ such as cleaning up and putting things away. In that way, we were predominantly involved in this setting by putting the graffiti project and its preparations on the agenda.

In terms of our relationship to the youth / girls' workers, being our gatekeepers, we were very much supported by the youth centre's management (the pedagogical and administrative leaders) from the beginning on throughout the project. Still, during the cooperation, questions of unexpressed reservations came up, as the girls' rather irregular attendance also makes the relationship building and continuous work to the youth workers difficult; in some instances, more grown-ups were present than girls, somehow "over-caretaking" the girls. At the same time, we found ourselves in a position of dependence e.g. for promoting our activities, such as the Graffiti workshop, inside and outside the girls' garden. The relationship to our gatekeepers was characterised by cooperation, dependence and needed support (e.g. for promoting our activities) as well as scepticism of our "success" in realising our project since participatory approaches are not a blank field we invaded.

The project as a whole was regarded by most of the girls involved during this half-year process as "our – the researchers' – project". They were polite to support us with ideas for the flyers and posters and with ideas of what wording to take (e.g. no teenager understands the word "workshop"), and recommended to use pictures and drawings for the posters and flyers. When asking (too often, perhaps) if they came next week to continue with collecting ideas and preparing the workshops one of the girls answered, "We are not without hobbies."²⁴⁹ At another time, when we were "chasing" interviews and informal talk opportunities with young people they put their position like this, "Do you fear we would

²⁴⁸ RD, p. 38

²⁴⁹ RD, p.11

leave if you left us alone right now?²⁵⁰ It was clear: they are the subjects of interest and have the power to withdraw.

Picture 5: The final graffito



The final event, when the “Mädchengarten” graffito was spray-painted on the wall in September during the final season party, was a very dense experience: in short time everything and with comparatively many girls present – from concept, contents and motives to the concrete procedure of spray-painting – was completed. During the whole period of action research we envisaged to spray-paint a mixture

of a common piece and individual artistic pieces in the end.

Picture 6: The making of the wall vis-a-vis the girls' garden



The procedure was the following: (1) all girls and ourselves together whitened the wall; (2) the two workshop leaders, (one female and one male street-artist²⁵¹), wrote in big bubble letters with chalk “Mädchen Garten” on the wall to structure the piece; (3) girls painted whatever they pleased on the wall: their names, their football clubs, stencils. The small ones used

pencils or their fingers, the bigger ones took the spray cans; (4) the outlines of “Mädchen Garten” by the older girls together with the two trainers were drawn “over spraying” the graffiti landscape to get a real picture; (5) one of the workshop leaders spray-painted an “artistic piece”, a girls’ head holding a spray can, into the space between the words “Mädchen” and “Garten.

The main feedback by the participating girls and youth workers was that it would have been important to communicate better, how this workshop was structured and who should and could spray-paint what and where. The girls said in a reflection round that the artistic piece (the girl's head) was beautiful though they “were pissed” that the artist overspray painted parts of their own graffiti.

For us this was a justified objection and an interesting finding: For months, we tried to accompany and trigger a participative process. There would have been all time of the world to come to a common conclusion on what should be spray-painted on the wall and in what way. When the workshop “outside” finally took place “when the serious part” started, time

²⁵⁰ RD, p.6

²⁵¹ We tried to organize two female workshop leaders, however it was impossible to bring two of these rare professionals together to the two workshops. Therefore, we decided to engage one primarily responsible (female) trainer who was supported by a male one who as well had long lasting experiences with graffiti workshops with girls.

was limited to come to a common consensus and conclusion. The process at this particular event was rather chaotic and hardly participative in its structure also due to the “passing by” of different and many girls at different times. This meant that we were not able to define a common “starting point” for the action. This process as a tension between individual ideas and a collective outcome was very difficult to accompany. Finally, the workshop leaders directed this process straightforwardly to come to an end - and to come to a spray-painted piece that all (future) visitors of the girls' garden might find attractive.

In conclusion of our methodological reflections, we would resume that the “action part” that we tried to carry out together with the young people, was very difficult to conceptualise and implement in a participatory manner. This was due to the irregular and unpredictable presence of girls in the girls' garden and also due to their changing motivation to contribute to this process or not. In carrying out a project, some kind of structure has to be followed. There are things to be done and organised, there are chronological steps to be taken. When permanently new participants show up, a continuous proceeding with committed participants is not possible. This is – as was also confirmed by the youth workers – a general problem in youth work that proclaims participatory processes as principles in their professional field.

However, all the trials and errors of this process to implement an action that was at the same time part of the ethnographic field research, the permanent interaction with girls, their motivation or reluctance to contribute to our proposals or to bring in their own ideas, were necessary steps for learning about girls' positionalities and agency in semi-public spaces and the role of feminist or gender-sensitive youth work in it. According to Chahill (2007, 299) knowledge produced through participatory techniques in a closed setting is not necessarily and enough for reflecting and articulating wider power relations in society. Therefore, we must in any case link insights from participatory action research processes and interventions to questions of inequality and empowerment in a multi-oppressive society (ApsanFrediani 2010). What remains in addition is the possibility to pursue with a feminist graffiti project: the wall is legalised right now and has more 30 metres to be designed.

6. Conclusions and policy-relevant implications

The Austrian case study provided insights into challenges and chances of *participatory* and *socially innovative* approaches in gender-sensitive youth work. We took the girls' garden as our home base and starting point for scrutinizing what added-value girls-only spaces and girls' group offer for girls and for a juster society as a whole. The participatory approach of the research was accomplished by the methods used such as arts-based practices and with respect to their possibly transformative character.

The conclusions section will resume first how gender as a relationship of structural inequality pervades aspirations, societal integration and projected trajectories of young people. Secondly, we will argue in what ways gender-sensitive and feminist youth work can support the critical articulation and contestation of young people's (young women's) narratives, aspirations and conceptions of justice in social policies and practices as well as in other aspects of their daily lives?

Gender as a structural category in adolescence and youth work

The necessity for feminist youth work becomes obvious when we take gender as a structural category – for distributive injustice due to the class structure of society, for misrecognition due to status inequality, and for representative exclusion (Fraser 2004, 2008) – pervading human relations among young people and between grown-ups and young women seriously. We showed the prevalence of gender-specific aspects of oppression and violence both in public and semi-public spaces and private spheres. Gender-specific inequality exists in the use of space and concerning the appropriation of public and semi-public spaces. Boys more often than girls frequent youth centres as semi-public and low-threshold places. Hence, girls and boys use and need different offers of support and leisure activities provided by (open) youth work and support in conquering public space. Although gender-specific youth work must encompass working with girls and boys “only” spaces must follow principles of anti-sexism as a legacy of feminist youth work. Girls-only spaces must not be discredited by equally demanding boys-only spaces on the ground of „equal opportunities“. Structural deficits of youth work as social work are to be met by dedicating resources to less powerful groups.

Gender-sensitive and feminist girls' work is a youth work response to inequality and difference among young people stemming (not only) from the category gender. It is a kind of policy being fed by an informational basis for the judgement of justice that takes serious persistent inequalities among girls and boys and consequently between men and women and recognises gender as a major reference point for policy intervention. The emancipation from limit-situations that are the vessels constraining one's room for manoeuvre and not the adaptation of one's life course to them is the big challenge of this kind of policy.

The added-value of girls-only spaces

It is crucial to accompany girls in transition processes in all possible spheres of life, trying to create free spaces and to amplify the girls' scope of action, facilitating "identity building" and transgressing gender roles (Bitzan 2010; Batsleer 2013). The teenage period is a critical period of gender identity formation. Therefore, adequate space and methods for searching and trying out are needed, for "doing gender" and for reflecting the body as a central battlefield of gender norms. Our research showed how girls are using and that girls are appreciating a space that they can occupy for themselves. The girls' garden is an example for such a space. It offers experiences of doing and behaving that are more difficult or impossible to accomplish in mixed settings. It is a place to act and to try out bodily experiences without reference to boys and with less hetero normative pressure. Since it is a garden, girls are not only away from home and its social control but also outside in a safe and semi-public space. We emphasized in this report the importance of young people's contribution going beyond their opinion and including their involvement into the concrete implementation of ideas. The girls' garden is a place where meaningful contributions can happen. Girls together with youth workers and other (female) visitors use the "material" in terms of "nature" and tools this place is offering. They are trying out what is seemingly not possible in other (public) or private (family) spaces, moving from capabilities to functionings in gardening and building/constructing, climbing, showing and moving their bodies – and doing graffiti in a public space.

Arts-based practices and empowerment of girls

Feminist youth work aims at enhancing girls' presence and symbolism in youth and youth work and in the society as a whole (in public space, in language, etc.). We showed in how far arts-based experiments such as graffiti have the power to strengthen the transformative character of participation in girls-only settings. How do girls' ideas and voices in the context of street-art emerge, become visible and find their spots? On the one hand, we motivated voices through artistic practice *"of the moment, belonging to a pedagogy of the here-and-now"* (Batsleer 2011, 428). New ideas and finally whole oeuvres emerged through this artistic process starting from a self-perception of many girls not being capable of drawing. The practice of street-art involved a commitment to risk-taking with respect to ideas, fantasies, and oneself becoming visible, public and subject to deliberation when performing in public space. This – we would argue – is a breaking through limit situations in the sense of Freire (1970) and a feminist practice of turning private issues (the restricted space appropriation of girls) into public ones.

On the other hand, the practice of street-art is a commitment to visibility and to symbolization in public space. It involves also a commitment to public scrutiny and debate. Girls' spaces and girls-only gangs/groups in public space become symbolized as a political issue and become subject to social deliberation. Moreover, it is a public performance with respect to the symbols staying on the wall such as "Mädchengarten" or their names. It confronts and perhaps provokes the public with political issues such as the existence and symbolization of girls' groups and girls' space as well as with an offensive claim for girls'

appreciation and symbolic visibility in public space. This means limit-situations in terms of constrained and contested (public) space become visible and get public attention. At the same time, a careful balancing between publicity and the commitment to the principle of providing a safe, enclosed and targeted space for girls must be born in mind and the tension between these two poles discussed.

Policies towards gender-sensitive youth work

The recognition of gender in policy programs and initiatives nowadays often only goes along with the adaptation to the prevailing norms and structures (that is a capitalist world arranged along male life courses); and the recognition of subjective differences only comes along with individualization. Specific life situations are here within interpreted as choice of one's own or in negative terms as self-blamed and not as being part of societal constellation, that structurally oppresses particular groups of young people. In contrast, feminist youth work uncovers the limit-situations girls encounter in our society (Bitzan/Daigler 2004) and aims at the enhancement of equal opportunities with respect to external conversion factors (such educational, employment and reproductive trajectories) but also with respect to the recognition of female life course experiences (such as care obligations). Our research showed that the formation of aspirations is closely connected with identity formation and with realising what role is foreseen for girls and boys in a society that is strongly divided along the gendered lines of behaviour, doing and labour.

Hence, youth work with girls and gender-sensitive youth work necessarily includes a politisation of youth work in at least two directions: First, a back-up of public policy for gender-specific / feminist /participatory youth work is crucial. It is not a separate "niche" subject of individually committed youth workers (Bitzan/Daigler 2004, 68-70). It is a political decision, a contested field also on district level where resources are to be allotted or not. Positive examples are local policies of Vienna's 7th and 11th districts where gender-sensitive youth policies and girls-only spaces are welcome and supported on local policy level.

Second, youth centers must follow a "true" commitment to enhance participatory parity between boys and girls. Time constraints and limited personnel resources jeopardise the involvement and thinking through of adequate practices on the one hand, as one youth worker admits, „But if we are stuck in daily business and time gets tighter and tighter, those things [gender-specific offers] are the first ones to be cancelled.“²⁵² On the other hand, the principle of gender-sensitive youth work is sometimes interpreted as a „must“ or a duty that is anyway kept in mind. The "Association of Viennese Youth Centers" developed a (not binding) guideline for girls' work²⁵³ recommending - as boys still dominate public spaces -to provide and design spaces for and together with girls. However, the simple assertion that gender-sensitive youth work is a principle is not enough. It must be implemented and lived in daily practice, in dedicated projects, in reflection processes, and in permanent dialogue with young girls and boys.

²⁵²Int_JW3

²⁵³http://typo.jugendzentren.at/vjz/fileadmin/pdf_downloads/pdf_f_experts/maedchen_kopie_neu.pdf, only in German

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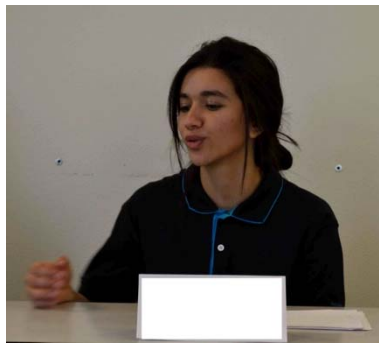
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CASE STUDY FRANCE: One Young, One Voice

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Céreq



1. Executive Summary

To address our common research question – "to what extent and in what way social policies and their implementation do they take seriously the views of young people in difficulties," – we have chosen to investigate in a semi-rural area of Aquitaine : Agen where school failure phenomena are particularly acute. For the target age group of youth policies in France, 16-25 years, this phenomenon is one of the causes of poverty and difficult access to the labor market.

To grasp the point of view of these particularly vulnerable young people, we have tried to involve them in research, avoiding to take them as objects but rather as actors of our research. Our approach is based on a participatory approach, the CCAPPA. This method allows to compare their experiences of support programs through confrontation with case managers and policy makers.

Our findings highlight that two principles of justice collide and hinder the implementation of the local programs and initiatives in favor of the young dropouts. Policy makers indeed ground their actions on the principle that a just society is based on fair institutions, but youth stories show its limits. Their difficulties to comply with an appropriate behavior expected from public institution (being motivated for example) are rarely taken into account and, makes it difficult to get them out of this precariousness.

2. Introduction

The empirical results from WP4 have shown that at least for France two categories of experimental support organizations and programs for dropouts emerge at the local level. The first one, the Micro High School, focuses on bringing dropouts back to school and have them get the higher secondary school level (Baccalauréat). The second one, The Youth Guarantee, aims at providing social and professional remediation through access to the labour market preparation.

Without being experimental, a third kind of program is offered the French ministry of education to dropouts at the local level: the Relay Insertion Pole (PRI). It aims at offering an integrated approach (individual coaching, school remediation and on the job training) for “fresh” early school leavers (i.e. during the first year of school leaving).

Thus, as proposed in WP4, our results are based on the study of a bouquet of public offer targeting a particularly vulnerable population: the early school leavers.

This empirical work has been carried out within a territory, the agglomeration of Agen (city center), chosen for two main features:

- The enrolment of 15-17 years, well below the national average (-3.3 points) and regional (-3.4 point).
- Low skilled youngsters from 15 years and older is substantially higher than the regional average (2.6 points).

We discussed the possibility of studying a second area, that of Montanou (see; French qualitative report WP3 & 4), but these three programs are not locally implemented so we have decided to focus on the city centre.

As pointed out in the French WP3 report, the risk of unemployment of a secondary school dropout in France is multiplied by three compared to a professional bachelor. The early school leaving is a key indicator of the factors of persistent inequality. That’s why we have chosen to focus on early school leaving remediation and on a set of programs – a bouquet – proposed to young dropouts.

This bouquet is made of three programs

1. Micro High School. Micro high schools are one of the experimental solutions proposed by the Ministry of Education to resume ESL. The objective is to create one micro high school per region. The Agen’s one emerges from the initiative of the vocational high school teachers and is the first in France to be located in a vocational upper secondary school. It prepares dropouts to graduate a professional degree with in 2 sectors (administration and trade management). It welcomes dropouts from 17 to 25 year.
2. Youth Guarantee. Youth Guarantee is above all the first minimum income skills offered to youngsters under 25 in France and in connection with the European Youth Gaurantee program. This program is targeted on NEETs and implemented on an experimental basis in Agen since 2013 fall. The youth guarantee consists in a

reinforced support local missions and a MIS. It aims at bringing dropouts quickly on the labour market.

3. **Relay Insertion Pole.** The insertion relay poles (PRI) are for students over 16 who have left the previous year school without school or professional solution without qualification or out during the year. The PRI Agen (to be completed following Friday). The relay insertion pole (PRI) offers young dropouts over 16 years to develop a "realistic" career project through courses and work experience. However, the number of available places limits the welcome in this device. These are largely underestimated in relation to need.

Nota Bene: These 3 programs are independent and carried out by 2 institutions. The 1 and 3 belong to national education, the 2nd to the PES. Formally, nothing prevents the passage from one to another. But our results show that young people receiving Youth Guarantee support are those for whom the 2 other programs have not been considered. They are the most vulnerable among our young people.

Beyond the 4 comparative common questions (inequality, participation, innovation, aspiration), we questioned each program in terms of the experience of institutions lived by youngsters particularly in terms of the use / non-use of the public offer. The empirical material was collected using group interviews conducted in the form of CCAPPA (Contradictory, Collective And Participatory Policy Analysis). This method, described in detail in section 5 of this report is based on the confrontation of the youngsters perception and experience vis-a-vis the public institutions. This direct confrontation, conducted on the basis of our research questions, sheds lights on the gap existing between the awaited behaviour of youngsters from institutions and the actual ability of people to meet with these expectations.

3. Research questions and research design

The main research question of the SoclEtY research is strongly related to the voice left to youngsters and the way this voice is taken into consideration by youth institutions.

In addition to this the French team has developed a set of questions dealing with the reception of public policies by youngsters. These questions are strongly related to the results of WP4 in which local support networks have been studied. This study has given a particular attention to the way these networks coordinate in order to offer an articulated "bouquet" of rights and services to dropouts. This previous study has shown that the three main pillars (Youth Guarantee, Micro-high school and Relay Insertion Pole) of this local public offer to dropouts are poorly interconnected. This observation has led us to further investigate in WP 5, and from the point of view of youngsters confronted to the institutions' one, the way Agen's dropouts access to the public offer and if this latter is really tailor-made.

This secondary set of questions has been investigated by using a participatory method based on the confrontation of the youngsters and institution's representative point of views (see section 5.1). It is composed of four dimensions:

1. *Public offer and its reception by youngsters.* The aim is to assess if and how this public offer is suitable for youngsters and help them enhance their capabilities. The following dimensions are being investigated

- a. Concrete access to public offer
 - b. Youngsters' reasons to choose one element of the bouquet rather others
 - c. Non take-up
2. *Brakes and levers in local implementation of programs.* The objective is to identify and discuss, from the point of view of youngsters and from the debate raised with policy makers, these brake and levers in practical and concrete terms. 3 points are being investigated:
- a. Brakes and levers linked to the conception of the programs
 - b. Brakes and levers linked to the implementation of the programs
 - c. Brakes and levers linked to the experimental dimension of the programs
3. *Individualisation.* In relation with WP4, the objective is to question the way the programs can be adapted by implementers to the youngsters' individual needs and aspirations. Two dimensions are investigated:
- a. Discretion left to the street level bureaucrats in order to adapt the public offer to individuals
 - b. How the youngsters evaluate the individualization in the program's implementation
4. *Territory: a relevant variable?* The objective is to observe if the territorial dimension is at play in the youngsters' point of view on the public offer. 4 dimensions are taken into consideration:
- a. Specificity of the territorial dynamics with regards to the dropout question
 - b. Youngster's territories vs public action spaces: what correspondence?
 - c. Mobility and access to public offer
 - d. Institutions' coordination view by youngsters: resource of control mean?

- **What was the research design you applied?**

The research design and methods is based on the development and implementation of a new method, CCAPPA (Contradictory, Collective And Participatory Policy Analysis) adapted from the French sociological intervention method. These elements are fully described in section 5.3 especially with regards the participatory dimension.

4. Research Findings

First, It should be kept in mind here that we consider vulnerable people as individuals combining precariousness on the labor market with fragility of the primary family and social ties (Castel, 2009).

In this section we first present our empirical results with regards to the four common SocIEtY themes: inequalities, participation, capability to aspire and innovation (section 4-1 to 4-4). Then we develop our own research questions dealing with dropout's experience of policy access and implementation (accessibility, individualization, brakes and levers in policy design and implementation, territory - section 4-5).

4.1 Inequalities

Our aim in this section is to capture the inequality factors as perceived (and expressed) by vulnerable young people, and compare them with the factors put forward by the policy makers and implementers as they emerged during the CCAPPAs. We will show that, unsurprisingly, from the point of view of youngsters, public institutions are mostly accountable for these factors while institutional actors tend to transfer the responsibility of their vulnerability to the individual themselves.

Sen's opposition between two principles of justice highlighted in WP4 are highly relevant here: *Nyaya*, principle of justice anchored on achievements, life and freedom of human beings vs *Niti*, based on policies and rules (Sen, 2009, p. 20). When our *groups* of deprived youngsters highlight the hardships and oppressions they face, their *interlocutors* question their behaviour and very scarcely the programs and their implementation. These are not always so clear-cut, but the debates can be controversial, even suggesting the disappearance of a program as an answer to the criticism of the youngsters

- Eylie (young micro high school): *You do not know where to put us in fact.*
- Ministry of education's representative: *So what? we give up the program because of that?"*

But before addressing the factors of inequality, we would like to stress the pain expressed by the dropouts we met. Thus, at the start of one of our CCAPAA:

- Lola (micro high school): *Do not worry about the questions they will come when they will, you know we have to let the pain come out!*

A series of factors of inequality emerge from our interviews.

4.1.1 Schooling

School careers are among the top factors of inequality mentioned by young dropouts. First and foremost, orientation to technical and vocational secondary education, perceived as relegation sectors, is pointed out:

- Yassin (youth guarantee): *my average marks were 11. I mean, I have not been giving it my all and I have been directed to construction (vocational education) instead of accepting in the upper secondary school, just like my brother.*
- Chairman local mission: *You wanted to do what?*
- Yassin: *I do not know, normal studies.*

As a cause of ESL, young people regularly put forward economic conditions:

- Yassin (youth guarantee): *It takes money to keep studying.*

However some *interlocutors* counter that they have poor knowledge of the system, such as the existence of institutional financial support (grants), without questioning the sufficiency of these aids with regards to their living conditions. It is easier to highlight their lack of motivation:

- Chairman of local mission / Deputy mayor: *Then look at the scholarships. What is offered to you. I honestly think that a student who wants to, even if he is in an*

important uncertainty, we must manage to find him either scholarships or other full-level support systems that can help him to support oneself. I believe in that, I believe in motivation!

But how can one take up something that he/she does not know he/she has access to? or if he/she is not aware of the means to access it? This questions the information as a means of converting a resource (scholarships) into a capability (for education). This appears as a blind spot for institutional actors in our material.

In terms of teaching, the lack of tutoring time for struggling students and the number of pupils by class are among the factors identified as penalizing vulnerable young people. On these points, the *interlocutors* can shift responsibility to the top institutional level: the State (which does not provide them with the means to fulfil their missions). But before questioning the institution, it is the individual responsibility that is pointed out:

- Chairman of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *The problem for me in today's society is not the crisis, although the young are in a huge uncertainty, but the parents have also resigned from their duties for a number of years. The structures of the Republic, the rules of life, they have fallen.*

The Niti principle can be found right here: inequalities borne out of the non-compliance of individuals.

4.1.2 Social capital

Young people also identify the issue of social capital as a source of inequality:

- Chairman of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *During Christmas time, I managed to get a job for 3 persons in 3 PLIE town halls.*
- Issam (youth guarantee): *But it's not normal, I mean the string pulling.*
- Chairman of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *it is not string pulling; there was a job interview anyway.*
- Issam: *But there are people like you who do string pulling.*
- Chairman of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *But if I manage to find you a job in my town hall, I'll give it to you. It's normal.*
- Issam: *it is not normal.*

On the youngsters' side, consistency is required. If they are told to participate in a system they consider unfair, they will logically reject it. The relevant thing for them is to change the (social innovation) when their *interlocutors* deem them to accept their support. We are confronted here to two different perspectives: change the established order to remove inequalities (*group*) or accommodate to reduce (*interlocutors*).

4.1.3 Age

As noted in the French WP3 report of the SociEtY program, the age is among the factors of inequality. 18 to 24 is a blind spot age gap in France since it escapes the safety nets developed in favour of the most vulnerable individuals for other age categories.

- Moussa (micro high school): *I have the impression that nothing is done for young people up to 25. After 25 you've got the RSA (French minimum income scheme) but before this period of time, what do we do?*

Moussa is right, before 18 social rights and benefits are attached to the family, and shift to the individual only after 24. Between these two limits, an age group is left behind.

As mentioned in our WP3 report, in France disadvantaged youth are doubly excluded: excluded from the large community enjoying a "normal" standard of living and excluded also from the smaller community of the supported poor. Thus young people aged 18 to 24 are the forgotten of the French "solidarity net".

During the CAPPA sessions, the case-managers also confirm that before the introduction of the Youth Guarantee, youngsters without family support were in a terrible plight:

- “Educator at a Youth Hostel: *I think it was a nightmare before the Youth guarantee!*
- Jennifer (young dropout Youth Guarantee): *Exactly*
- Educator: *You expect to be 18 because you party, but if the relation between the youngster and his/her parents are bad, life after the party can be very hard. If we can continue with the Youth Guarantee in this department is going to be awesome. And if it can be extended at national level. That's good."*

4.1.4 Job quality

The other dimension raised as evidence of inequalities is the quality of jobs that youngsters have access to. These jobs are generally perceived (with reason) as marked by strong domination and poor working conditions, making them impossible to value:

- Abdel (youth guarantee): *catering, but it is slavery!*
- Youssef (micro high school) says he is looking for: *a job that does not fuck your health!*

4.1.5 Discriminations

The lack of social change perspective is among the causes for suffering. The most vulnerable mention racial discrimination in everyday life:

- *Thierry: Do you think that there is discrimination?*
- *Ahmed (micro high school): I do not think, I am sure!*
- *Thierry (speaking to the Chamber of industry interlocutor): And you are doing something to fight against discrimination?*
- *Interlocutor from Agen's Chamber of industry: Honestly, no.*
- *Assam (micro high school): And it is useless, a racist boss, remains racist!*
- *(...)*
- *Yassin (micro high school): I was looking for a job in an Intermarché (French supermarket). I called the girl and she said "no, we are still waiting for the CVs". At first, I wanted to break everything. Another friend was told "we take no one" and then another friend was taken. His first name is Matthew! How should we respond to that? We have known that since we were children!*

According to the youngsters' perspective, the matter of justice is not only to try to achieve it but also to prevent the blatant injustice. In their perspective, caring for the origins of inequalities in their lifecourse is a precondition to foster a better society.

The interlocutors of our CCAPPAs did not necessarily share this aspiration for justice in the same terms and this is where the Niti and Nyaya perspectives turned controversial again.

- Interlocutor from Agen's Chamber of industry: *You must have ideals. I have too but the reality is what it is and you must be pragmatic. You can fight from an ideological point of view but that's it. Full stop. It should not be idealized, it's not "got to be good, it will be good." You should be pragmatic: Where can I work? Leroy Merlin (French hardware supermarket) hire guys, good let's go to Leroy Merlin.*

It is also interesting to notice that while appreciating social justice, youngsters can also refer to a Niti approach and the importance of showing an appropriate behavior. As a consequence if an institutional actor does not apply the same rule to himself his functioning is considered twice unfair. First this reinforces the youngsters' loss of confidence in institutions and secondly it highlights the unfairness of asking to behave properly. Moreover, some contradictions can appear between a demanding discourse of institutional actors and the capacity limits weighing on their support action :

« Youth Guarantee counsellor 1 : *you talk about anything with us*

Youth Guarantee counsellor 2: *Normally we can deal with any of your problem but if we are not able to answer you by ourselves we'll redirect you. The youngster must talk with us about all his problems and if we can't deal with it internally, we guide toward an external support.*

Marion : *Well nobody listens to me, and if I try to talk the counsellors changes matter and there is no answer.*

Issam: *They are not really committed*

(...).

Issam : *I know it's hard for you but it is also hard times for us!*

(...)

Youth Guarantee counsellor 2: *Anyway the local mission can't do much, we are missing money to get enough counselors. »*



From this controversy, we point the importance of focusing on concrete achievements rather than on idealized institutions. Although rules for social justice exist – racial discrimination is subject to prosecution in France – it remains true that a discriminating society (as evidenced by the experiences of young people) is a completely unfair society.

4.1.6 Motivation

- Interlocutor from Agen's Chamber of industry: *Knowing pain is an advantage'(sic) ... You are not expensive²⁵⁴, you are in a motivational program, so yes you have the motivation.*

²⁵⁴ It should be reminded here that a recent study from the Ministry of education has shown, on the basis of Eurofound database, that the lifecourse cost of a single dropout is 230 000€.



From the perspective of policy makers and implementers, among the factors justifying inequality is a behaviour generally described under the term of "motivation"²⁵⁵. In line with the Niti principle, social achievements emerge from behavioural factors before structural or cyclical economic factors. The question is not raised in terms of structural social justice but in terms of non-compliance of individual behaviour.

- Issam (youth guarantee): *Today the big question is: does anyone find work?*
- Chairman of Local Mission / Deputy Mayor: *No!*
- Yassin (youth guarantee): *So what are we going to do?*
- Local Mission president / deputy mayor: *So, I still think that there is a parameter that is important, first, we need motivation.*

The counsellors interviewed at the local mission for youth confirm. One of the aims of the Youth Guarantee is to change the behaviour of young people:

- Youth Guarantee Counsellor: *it was presented to us as a program for school leavers in great difficulty, and we are asked to bring youngsters to autonomy. Financial autonomy, social and autonomy in job searches. Empower them in all areas.*

²⁵⁵ Etymologically, motivation refers to what determines the behaviour, the "reasons we give for action" (TLF). But from the point of view of the interlocutors, determinants usually stay for the individuals, not their social conditions.

Although in the administrative texts ruling the implementation of the device, it is supposed to act on the two levers of supply and demand²⁵⁶, our institutional interviewees often present as set on changing youngsters behaviour.

- President of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *The purpose of this device is to allow you, after a year, to be more of a “winner” (in English during the interview), to be more motivated to fight.*

And the purpose of the program can be forgotten:

- President of the local mission / Deputy Mayor: *I think this program is good because it is a new program that brings you a little bit of money. You are followed for a year. Then again it is only one year, you won't leave it with a job, but the objective is that you have at least the weapons to get the job.*

Now if we consider that the main way to help vulnerable people in precarious labour market is to act primarily on their behaviour, it may imply that public institutions consider that they are not "good enough " with the risk to induce that the vulnerability is not a social injustice.

As pointed out by Amartya Sen, the positional nature of views on the world influences and distorts the judgment on public affairs (Sen, 2009, p. 213). In the quest for justice, this "positional illusion" is an obstacle to overcome, mainly by expanding the informational basis of judgment. However, on the one hand, the institutional actors are caught in public action frameworks that shape their perception; yet on the other hand, if we follow Pierre Bourdieu, according to their social positions, all individuals are not free to build their own view. The dominated are supposed to take as their own the dominant vision of themselves. Amartya Sen observes this in other words about inequality, when he sees the opacity of positional objectivity as a major factor of its impact on individuals (Sen, 2009, p 215.).

Therefore, is the expression and the use of the opinion of vulnerable people without a previous work on their ability to build their own point of view the best way to reduce the inequalities they suffer from? If participation is defined as a way to improve social justice in public policies then this “socially built character” of individual perceptions should be considered. In terms of support to youngsters, working with them on self-reflexivity should be worth considering this character especially with regards to the assignment of social positions.

4.2 Social Innovation

The programs under study here are designed to deal with early school leaving. The Micro high school and the PRI are designed to achieve school reintegration while the youth

²⁵⁶ "The goal of coaching is to create direct links, immediate and privileged between youth and employers, as vectors for the development of social and professional autonomy of young people and factors of economic development of the territory. It is aimed to both youth and employers in a holistic and integrated approach, rooted in the economic reality of a territory "(“Toolbox of youth guarantee”, Ministry of Labour (DGEFP) EAP-SD 25/10 / 2013).

guarantee is oriented towards short-term employment, but limited by the supply of the local market. Thus, the experimental dimension here is nothing innovative in the sense that it's more about making young people aware of limiting their projects than truly allow their aspirations to come true. Nonetheless both the micro high school and the youth guarantee are experimental and last for less than one full year.

However, this experimental nature generates difficulties in achieving their goals. Thus, for the micro high school, as we pointed in WP4, the status of the pupils raises a livelihood issue that may hinder their return to study.

- Sofia (micro high school): *We are all more or less in need of financial independence. Some rent a flat. But still we are not entitled to unemployment benefits. We all need it.*

Although some compensation mechanism are available.

- Sami (micro high school): *Training is skills training, because it gives us a baccalaureate level. So qualifying training is equals to wages. The problem is that we changed status from job seeker to high school pupil. So since we're high school pupils, "niet" !!! it's just the status that's all. Just change the status!*

Young people here do not claim anything else than the minimum they are entitled to.

- Lyla (micro high school) *I was told that as an employee or job seeker I was entitled to unemployment benefits, but being a pupil I am entitled to my 180 euros CAF (social benefits) and after what do I live with?*

What their interlocutor from the PES responds is the principle of "stupid and evil" that can be understood as the lack of consideration for people's real lives and problems by the public institution in charge of the benefit and thus the prevalence of Niti:

- PES counselor: *I do not know why. Finally, the reasoning I will apply in a stupid and evil way, it's just that we assume that the person is no longer in employment because he/she just becomes a student of initial training and as such his/her benefits are suspended. This is the way it is anyway*

The problem of the deprivation of welfare rights (rights to benefits) highlights the lack of coordination between local actors, the joint failure between programs, and the institutional compartmentalization:

- Ministry of education's representative: *It's a plan to fight dropping out, so it is a program in a high school, so there is a student status. If they were in training, they would be trainees.*

And the deleterious effect that these status problem can bring in terms of ... motivation:

- Youssef (micro high school): *There are times when we wonder whether it's worth it. This is the snake biting its tail! I need a degree to get a job but I also need money to live.*

The low number of beneficiaries concerned also explains some of the operators lack of consideration for the issue at stake. And there is, perhaps above all, the desire to preserve corporate interests as we mentioned in WP4. Indeed, among the difficulties of getting back to school after ESL, the most prominent one is the lack of financial resources. However, the way to remedy the situation by changing the status of teachers in order to enable the pupils to benefit from the status of vocational training followers, and therefore get the compensation awarded by the regional council, was not chosen. Isolationism and corporatist membership to the "epistemic community"²⁵⁷ of Education prevailed.

- Micro high school teacher: *we wanted to stay in the traditional Education, (...) and we wanted to work on our time of service.*

4.3 Other key issues

Four specific issues related to policy implementation analysis have been developed in this case study:

- Access to programs
- Individualization
- Brakes and levers in implementation
- Territory

4.3.1 Access to the bouquet of public offer

- Youssef (micro high school): What is the Youth Guarantee?

The issue raised by Youssef, micro high school pupil after we asked if some of them were receiving it, implies that young people in vulnerable situations are not informed of all measures they are entitled to.

They also express some degree of distrust about the institutions they might have to deal with and the need to find shortcuts to solve their livelihood problems:

- Thierry: *Does everyone get to be financially independent?*
- All together: *no*
- Lola (micro high school): *Apart from screwing the employment agency, one cannot help it! I have a baby.*
- Amid (micro high school): *But if they catch her she is in trouble.*
- Véronique: *You think this is normal?*

²⁵⁷ Defined by Haas (1992) as the sharing of normative & causal beliefs, evaluation criteria of expert knowledge in their field, and of common practices

- Amid: *No, no, that's not normal, there are logics that are not normal but it is the law, that's how.*
- Véronique: *The law is made by men*
- Lola (micro high school): *Men who receive 10,000 euros per month! We don't have the same life!*

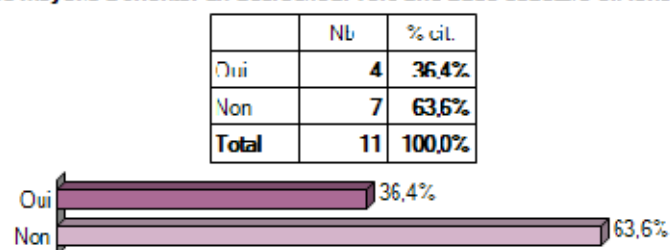
Knowledge of existing devices by their interlocutors is asked at the same time:

- Clothilde (micro high school): *Maybe the local employment agency and the local mission for youth do not know the criteria of micro high school either, maybe they are not aware.*

This highlights one of the results of WP4: indeed, our survey respondents from the local mission feel they have little means to guide a dropout to another structure as needed:

Q. Do you estimate having the ability to redirect early school leavers towards another structure if necessary?

Estimez-vous avoir les moyens d'orienter un décrocheur vers une autre structure en fonction de ses besoins ?



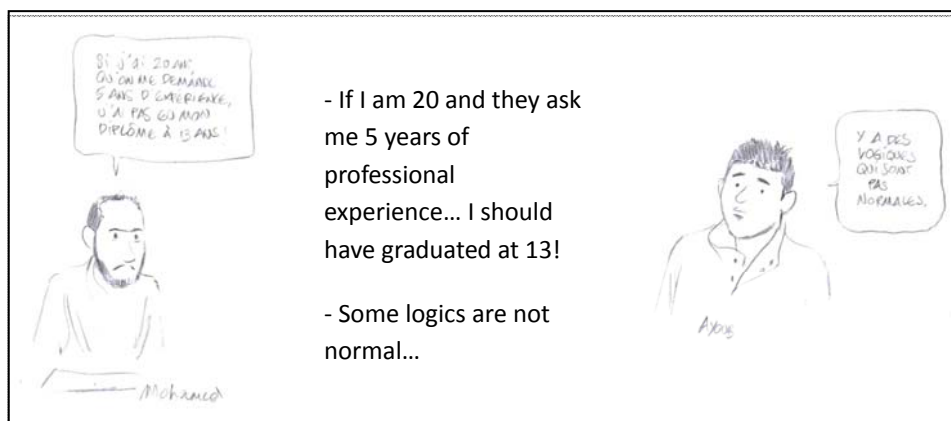
To the question "Whom do you work with?", little more than a third of the local mission counsellors have answered that they work with the micro high school. Our results on the relationship between implementers and the perception of youngsters reinforce one another here. Local mission and micro high school interact very little. The path of vulnerable youth suffers from this shortcoming and the effect can be extremely harmful and demobilizing:

- Youssef (micro high school dropout speaking about the rights to unemployment benefits): *Here I do not seek for training subsidies, I just want to get what I am entitled to.*
- Amed: *I see that the employment agency and the local mission urge us to stay at home (...) We are forced to do nothing!*

If young people know how to challenge the institutions, they also highlight the paradoxical demands addressed to them, as Lucie expressed.

- Lucia (micro high school): *In fact what sucks is that there was a time when we decided to leave school and start working. Then we took advantage of that because of unemployment benefits. At first it's cool to get money for a month doing nothing. Except that at one point I was fed up. I looked for a job and it goes like this: you want professional experience, but we are young. You want a degree but we left school before getting any. You want us to get back to school and afterwards you want us to*

have experience except that we have been getting back to school. So basically we just wanted to know what you want from us so we can finally be able to.



What his *interlocutor*, the Local mission adviser, answers to this is not the responsibility of the institution but the responsibility of the business world, them (local mission) being only transmitters of the demands from the labour market.

As pointed out by the representative of Agen's chamber of Industry:

- *A reconciliation that is not always easy, because it is historical. On the companies' side, corporate culture to train workers, and the education culture that has not the same vocation it is to train citizens.*

Reason to choose one particular program inside the bouquet

Going to the micro high school can be experienced on two opposite modes. For some, this return to training is a constraint imposed by a parent or the judiciary institution as an alternative to imprisonment, a default choice. For others, it is a resource, a real choice to move towards a position of value they know they cannot reach without a degree. It emerges from a willingness to change a chaotic life course or move out from precarious jobs, following the arrival of a child, for example. In this sense the school is a micro capacitating program.

Registration to the youth guarantee is experienced more on the survival mode than anything else. Having a minimum income for a period of one year and maybe get a job (whatever the kind) would cool down a permanent social emergency route. This program is a resource here in the strict sense of the term but with no capacitation perspective.

Nonetheless, among the most frequently raised questions in terms of early school leaving is the lack of spots for struggling young people in the regular school system. Following a banal event such as moving, the rupture can take place. The pupil is left without assignment and seems lost by the educational institution. Thus, if the vulnerable youngsters rely on institutions, that trust is not without risk. Seeking justice from institutions has this kind of limits.

Lack of spots for the most vulnerable persists beyond the school leaving. So inside the bouquet of remediation programs, enrolment can be by default:

- Guidance centre Director: *often there is not much choice among programs. Either we manage to integrate him/her into an institution directly or otherwise there is often only the PRI because to get in the micro high school he/she must have been out of school for a longer period, the offer is lean*

The non take-up

The three forms of non take-up – lack of knowledge of the offer (1), lack of application (2) and lack of compliance with the request (3) – can be found in our material:

Youssef's citation above clearly shows the lack of information as a cause of non-recourse to the offer (what's Youth Guarantee?).

To the request of getting back in training, the priority in accessing to employment can be opposed by a local mission, as happened for this young school leaver in the micro high school

- Lola: *When I went to tell them that I had a baby and that I wanted to return to school here they said "we can not help you, we can do nothing for you"*

Or as mentioned above, a refusal by ignorance of the procedures of the program:

- Francis (micro high school): *I have asked for the Youth Guarantee, I told my counsellor I was at the micro high school micro and all that, she said "no it's not possible, you are already at school, it was necessary to apply before" and then I learned that I have the right to it. I'm asking now asking for it with Mrs. X.*

The significance of these two forms of non take-up tends to validate the assumption that if young people know the offer they might use it. Therefore, developing the information on the public offer for young people would be one of the first measures to improve the situation of the most vulnerable.

4.3.2 Individualization

Let us first recall that a differential treatment could be experienced on the negative mode. It can be lived as a form of discrimination by youngsters and can appear as a difficulty to manage for implementers:

- Local Mission Advisor / Employment agency advisor: *There are not enough advisors to help you as it should be.*

When, in the words of the case managers, a program is customizable to fit with the needs of youngsters, this is rarely confirmed. Thus at the PRI, the pupils dispute the merits of some modules, especially those aiming to improve their self-esteem. Again, the most vulnerable are being returned to their relationship to themselves without taking into account the influence of institutions on their own image. Here are some pupils leaving school for guidance, lack of valuable assignment, relocation or family problems, and the action proposed is self improvement. They are once again hold responsible for failure.

Similarly, at the micro high school, the alternating schedule is penalizing for young people. The 3-week cycle courses, 3 weeks in a company is difficult to live. The teaching period appears too long for former students with learning difficulties.

At the local mission relations with companies are not sufficiently developed.

- Youssef (youth guarantee): *I will say that the local mission would have to enter the networks, to get in touch with temporary work agencies.*
- Advisor youth guarantee: *It's complicated because all the companies are not willing to receive groups. It takes them time. Some but not all accept. So when we can, depending on the profile of young people, we try to target the company that suits them but that is not always obvious. That's it.*

4.3.3 Brakes and levers

Among the pointed out youth guarantee limits lies the lack of advisors dedicated to its management and animation:

- Jessica (youth guarantee): *this is what I say, there are too many young people, they can not handle everything ... We're too many youngsters.*
- Advisor (youth guarantee): *it is true that the administration tasks takes over the individual support.*

Additionally, the aims presented to youngsters may differ from their objectives:

- Véronique: *What is being successful in youth guarantee for you?*
- Amid: *a job! (...) I'd be wasting my time if I have no job at the end.*
- Chairman local mission: *the guarantee is 450 euros. (...); It's guaranteed money. it is still the least worst*

Among the range of limits observed by young some are regularly pointed out:

Wrong targeting:

- Kevin (pupil PRI): *Tests on the computer, I find them completely unnecessary and I was told I had to work in an office when it's just the opposite. All that is intellectual is not for people who have dropped out?*

Lack of human resources:

- Guidance center Director: *there is one guidance counsellor for 1500 pupils, no that is not enough for sure!*

Failure to take into account the youngsters' aspirations:

- Laurie (pupil PRI): *I don't like the counsellors because I tell them what I want to do and they direct me to something else. They tell me I should not do that, because of my grades or because "it would not suit you"*

Downgraded education:

- Caroline (pupil PRI): *When we are here we say "shit". (...). Compared to what is being done, sometimes it's a little 6th (French first year of lower secondary school).*

4.3.4 Territory

Whether in terms of employment or training, our material shows a cruel lack of resources:

- Thierry: *Do you think the offer to dropouts is sufficient in Agen?*
- Teacher PRI: *No, (...) here we are two and a half staff members on the PRI and we are too few, that is obvious.*

Among the inequalities, territorial inequalities play a special part with regard to our case study (an average city in a rural zone). The training offer is too narrow in Agen and does not always meet with the pupils' choices. The effect is that some pupils may drop out by lack of commitment in courses that they feel forced to follow.

- Academic Officer (IENIO): *Youngsters must be mobile and it is part of the inequalities that we are trying to fight against. Mobility is compulsory for young people and we must accept that a 15-year-old person leaves home to pursue his studies. That's a problem here in a rural area. For example in hairdressing training courses, there are three applications for one spot.*

5. Discussion, revision et de reflexion

5.1 Aspirations and the capability to aspire

A great paradox lies in the several programs under study. The injunction to the project for vulnerable youth is accompanied by an enormous strain on their aspirations. Similarly, expectations for normalized behavior (be motivated) deny the importance of environmental and social levers to comply. It does not matter to these young people to get what they want, but what they are told they can get. The first limitation is their grade level, painfully reached after an unchosen path. Therefore their aspirations are limited only to opportunities allowed by the school institution. For the dropouts they are extremely low in France. In the initial school system, three existing channels, general, technical education, vocational education, only the last is at best open to students. For what regards further education, the only available solution is professional training.

5.1.1 Questions of aspiration

Almost all young people interviewed describe a lifecourse full of unfulfilled aspirations. Rare are those allowing themselves the wish to overcome their actual condition. This difficulty to project into the future, we shall see, is growing especially as the school remediation devices give little room for the expression of real desire (real) of youth in care but are waiting to them a realistic desire (adaptive).

Among the projects of youngsters, further studies are in first place. Yet the story of their school careers reported impossibility to achieve the valuable choices. General or specialized in a professional field, these projects have failed by rejection from the education institution or by financial reasons. These points were the subject of controversy over the CAPPA. School results are legitimately a factor blocking the curriculum from the perspective of policy-makers and operators. Similarly, the material and financial brakes can not be excused by the

existence of scholarships without either questioning the dissemination of information about their existence or their effectiveness to answer their specific problems.

Almost all young people interviewed describe a lifecourse full of unfulfilled aspirations. Rare are those allowing themselves the wish to overcome their actual condition. This difficulty to project into the future, we shall see, is growing especially as the school remediation devices give little room for the expression of real desire (real) of youth in care but are waiting to them a realistic desire (adaptive).

- **What kind of aspirations did you come across and were addressed?
Educational/occupational aspirations/consumption aspirations/political aspirations/any other?**

In a nutshell, the main aspirations mentioned by the 30 youngster interviewed under the CCAPPA method are not related to education, job seeking or consumption. The aspirations they mention are more generally linked with social justice and recognition.

First, they want to be treated like the other youngsters. They want their point of view to be given the same attention and respect. They claim for an equal dignity and legitimacy of their views and claims.

« We are all different. We think that what we think is good but it is seen as illegal. We think of good things but it is never good enough » (Alain, dropout PRI).

They also claim to be given a place in society. This is expressed in general terms as a way to enter a social space they marginalized from. Then, when they speak of education and their aspiration regarding their capability for education, they also aspire to be given a place. In relation with the French educational and guidance system they want their schooling wishes to be given consideration. They are often answered by education authorities and schools that there is no place for them...

They are often answered by education authorities and schools that there is no place for them...

This is confirmed by their interlocutors. The institutions can fail (no room left, re-schooling application untreated or refused). The fact that young people have their education dramatically interrupted do not revolt institutional representatives since a remediation offer exists and formally can be accessed. Rare in our material are those who claim to have been interested in real conditions of access to these devices, but many deplore the quantitative weakness of this offer given the number of young people involved. For the latter, the fatality is required. Institutions can not be perfect. In this sense, a second chance, do not offer the guarantee of an actual remediation since the basic material conditions are not met.



My first wish? That my third wish be taken into account

- « *I moved to Agen and I found myself without any high school where to go (...) I sent a letter to the « Académie » (i.e local ministry of education's authorities) but I received no answer and and there was no more place available at Lomet micro high school » (Laurent, dropout PRI).*
- « *When I was in 'troisième' (i.e. last year of middle school) I wanted to be trained plumber, I had found an employer but I couldn't find a high school because there was no room available for me » (Alain, dropout PRI).*

Beside the aspiration to social recognition, the youngster claim for the understanding of life mishap. As a frequent cause of school leaving, mishaps in their lifecourse should be better understood and taken into account by the educational system.

- « *I was concerned by this since the middle school. I was ok until the fourth grade and I started to behave because I had family problems in third grade and I left my mother's home to join my grandma ».* (Aurélie, dropout, PRI).
- « *I dropped out in primary school because I had family problems »* (Laurie, dropout, PRI).
- **Did you learn about the chances (or the lack of chances) for young people to expand or alter their capacity to aspire? If yes, who informed you and how? Inhowfar do your respective policies and practices go beyond the reconstruction of immediate needs and wants, of adapted preferences of youngsters and immediately available capacities? What is the relation between policies and preferences of youngsters?**

According to youngsters, little or no room for the capability to aspire is left in the studied programs.

The way the studied bouquet of programs deal with aspiration is quite difficult to describe since aspiration are regularly mixed with guidance and schooling procedure such as the rejection of their guidance choices. Nonetheless, theyoungsters highlight a range of problems:

The way the studied bouquet of programs deal with aspiration is quite difficult to describe since aspiration are regularly mixed with guidance and schooling procedure. Nonetheless, theyoungsters highlight a range of problems:

- The standardization of people processing by public institutions.
- The failure to take into account the characteristics of the local labor market, leading to paradoxical injunctions (apprenticeship training without employer),
- The ignorance of a yet old personal project from which we can assume that if the youngster does not want to change it is because he/she values it.
- The necessary change of case manager within the same institution to have his/her needs or aspirations taken into account.

This is how they present it:

- "Rachid (youth guarantee): *but their (local mission's counselors) job is what? help young people !*
- Jessica (youth guarantee): *Of course, but the problem with the local mission is that you'd better come up with ideas in mind already. Because otherwise they will make you turn, turn, turn, they will make you do some guidance, some training, they have roughly the same route for all young people in fact. The problem is that you have to be cash with them, if you're not cash, they will fool you around in circles. if you hesitate it's a problem.*

(...)

- Rachid (youth guarantee): *I have always been fan of cars, it has never changed, I'm attracted to that. And why not being a mechanic or your own dealer.*
- Jennifer (youth guarantee): *Rachid Coach!*

(Laughs).

- Juliette: *About your project they brought you some things at the local mission?*
- Rachid: *nothing*
- Thierry: *and why?*
- Rachid: *they told me "do an apprenticeship" except that we must find an employer. But we did not find.*

(...)

- Carine (youth guarantee): *I want to do personal carer.*
- Juliette: *How did this project emerge? Is this something you wanted to do since a long time?*

- Carine: *Since I was out of high school, it's been 5 years since I left ... and I have nothing(...). I asked for that when I arrived the local mission but he wanted to know nothing. The first time was at the estuary (northern part of the Aquitaine region). He wanted to know nothing. I have a vocational degree level in sales and personal services. He told me do not you have the capacity. But I told him I did 4 internships in a retirement home he wanted to know anything. So I changed adviser to go to the Youth Guarantee”.*

They often point the lack of voice as a constraint on their aspirations. As mentioned by Caroline (Dropout, PRI) « *I was forced to come here because I was 15. I wanted to get back to school and I was forced to attend here* ». The period between school leaving and solution seeking (so called ‘latency period’) is extremely important. It puts the efficiency of public policies into question and underlines the importance of the non take-up problem. Lets quote again Caroline’s words : « *I dropped at fifth grade (2nd year of middle school) and it was quite hard to get back into it and at the end of my seconde third grade (fourth and last year of middle school) I had nothing...* »

What is reflected in the following interview is the successive attempts of a youngster to fit in prescribed projects imposed:

- Jennifer (youth guarantee): *“Basically, when I left college, I wanted to be a pediatric nurse. But due to a lot of things I was not able to do it according to the guidance counselor. So I was directed towards apprenticeship in family and community environment, (...). Well I did not like it but I did it anyway. After (...) I was interested by the hostess job for the elderly. Now I have been told that I had to do a BAFA (French diploma for youth leader and worker) it has nothing to do with it. (...) Then suddenly I dropped the case, and after I got home with the Guarantee Youth and now in terms of concrete project, I have nothing”.*

Despite all attempts to comply with the institutional request made to her, the path of Jennifer is marked by failure. By not taking into account the value assigned by youngsters to their own life projects, the support institutions cannot achieve its goal of reducing vulnerability, but instead keeps it going on.

The poor quality cursus (PRI) or jobs (youth guarantee) offered to them is also lived by them as downgrading their aspirations. Rejection after rejection, they often express the fact that they don’t have any ambition or aspiration left. Jennifer tells us: « *I have no ambition, I have had some, I have no more left.* »

Inside school little room is left to individual project. Pupils are supposed to love school but the social condition of this compliance are never put into questions.

« *Motivation is not linked with the project, it doesn’t work this way. What is important is to love school. If you love school it will work, naturally* » (CIO director)

- **On the basis of your case study data, to what extent are aspirations and the capability to aspire impacted by social context? What kind of contextual elements were influential?**

The main contextual elements brought to the forefront by the interaction of youngsters and case-managers are the following :

The territory as a space of opportunities but also a set of mobility constraints.

Living conditions are also important since most of the further education and training are not paid and are then often reserved to youngsters leaving at their parent's home. This last element was already pointed out in the WP4 report.

5.1.2 Impact of inequality on this capability

Among many of the youngsters surveyed here we found dropouts claiming to suffer from the almost systematic rejection of their project. They perceive the hardness of professional path prescribed to them and try to escape it. This is what motivates their enrollment in a remediation system:

- Fabien (micro high school): *I don't want to do assembly line work. I want to graduate to work sitting on a chair, work at a desk.*
- Lola (micro high school): *I want to get there, I want to get out ...*

However, we cannot oppose their lack of submission to the "choice" imposed on them. The magnitude of adaptive preferences are revealed here:

- Véronique: *and when we talk about job's offers, can you choose, or are you forced to take what you find?*
- Jennifer (youth guarantee): *No, it's what you find or you're not about to work! I do stuff I don't want to do; I have to, otherwise it does not work. I don't care, we cannot be fussy.*

(...)

- Rachid (youth guarantee): *In any case we cannot make the picky. We have to take what is proposed. Society goes wrong; we have to take the job there is. 1 euro is 1 euro.*

5.2 Substantial freedoms of participation

In France, "the political participation of young people is marked by two trends: a lower voter turnout and a rise in protest participation. Juvenile associative participation is characterized by more stability. For twenty years, more than a third of young French people adhere to an association in sporting, cultural and leisure mostly. The level of education is still discriminating on participation: the political deficit is widening the least among young graduates, while the associative membership increases with higher levels of education "(National Institute of Youth and the popular education (INJEP), Fiches repères, June 2012, our translation). Our results confirm these observations. The groups of interviewed youngsters appear poorly socialized to politics (see below). However, many of them have a very critical and perceptive views on some of the social mechanisms underlying their situation. But it should also be recalled that all the youngsters interviewed are already

enrolled in a remediation process. Some French youngsters, not followed by any support program, may be more desocialized.

- **What *political issues*, i.e. young people's rights, needs, desires and aspirations are deemed valuable from their perspective? If and how are these issues politicised? What other “alternative” forms of political deliberations do they emphasize and which spaces of influence are tackled and needed for it?**

Starting with political participation, the youngster's voice is weak. When we spoke of voting to young people, they answer that they know little about it. First in terms of modalities,

- *Jessica: You're the first to say that!!! I swear, I was never told to vote. I even don't know what it is to vote. I did not even know how to get a voter's card.*

Secondly, in terms of the importance of their voice: they perceive themselves under the mode of social invisibility causing the loss of trust in politicians:

- *Medhi: Politicians, it's all the same! They take money like that! We are trying to get by and they seek money!*

Therefore we have not been able to identify any space of political influence for the deprived youngsters' point of view. In general terms, young people have the formal possibility to participate to a few bodies such as the municipal council or the class council but the interviewed dropouts tell a storyline marked by isolation and social invisibility for some.

They generally express a lack of confidence in politicians:

- *“Politicians, they are all the same! They take money this way. We are trying to get by and they just look for cash!” (Rachid, jeune décrocheur garantie Jeunes).*

According to some, the case-manager's care would be linked to their cost:

- *“They are going to help those who cost them money not those who are costless” (Amid, dropout micro highschool).*

Finally, equality as a fundamental democratic principle seems unreachable:

- *“It's lousy when one was not born in the right line, it is done to prioritize some people, not everyone” (Issam, dropout micro highschool).*

This disenchantment is accompanied by a loss of meaning:

- *“What is the logic of all this?” (Samy, Dropout, Youth guarantee).*



Some logics are not normal

- When participation is coming to the forefront, it always implies a decisive **perception of democracy (the processual character of participation)**: How are processes of democracy/participation perceived? If and how is democracy/participation related to questions of justice? What does “Self-organisation” imply in different institutional settings and for the concept of participation? How do existing inequalities impact on participation, its formal possibility and its effectiveness?

If they try to question the institution, the action may turn back to their responsibility, their behaviour, and psychological factors:

- Colette (micro high school): *I went to see a social worker and a nurse, but I was told the same thing, that I had to go to a health center. Yet I had no psychological problems, no family problems, it was just about issues within the school.*

The issue of inequality impacts participation since the view of disadvantaged young people is not taken into account. Whether at school for what regards guidance wishes or after for a desirable job "which doesn't screw your health", their experience of discrimination is one of "not being treated like any other". In this sense inequality and participation are correlated.

- Concerning the **sub-topic of service-user participation**: How are young people addressed? Do these policies, programmes and practices privilege certain voices (e.g. expressed according to official standards) at the expenses of others? Do these policies, programmes and practices allow, and give weight and significance to, alternative and dissent voices and modes of expression?

On participation, our results show differences according to the programs of the bouquet. Participation in a program entails the possibility to express one's voice especially in a critical way. The point of view of youngsters in micro high school is more critical than that of young people under Youth Guarantee. The former are in a program designed to address the main cause of their vulnerability (and failure, i.e lack of degree) while the second aims at

providing means of living and entry on the labour market. The first seem more rebellious than the latter due to their situation and are more aware of the social conditions that led them there.

If we agree with Sen that popular participation and public reasoning are feeding democracy, then we can say that none of the programs understudy are truly democratic in their design and implementation. Young people can express their criticisms or challenges to meet the expectations of the program (financial support at micro high school or downgraded education at PRI) but this is not followed by any modification of the program (one of the effects of participatory research has been to allow the expression and discussion of these needs with decision makers). Similarly, a charter discussed with young people is signed at the entrance to the Youth Guarantee but its principles have been defined at the European level, declined nationally and implemented locally, without the specificities of each youngster to be truly taken into account. Thus, for example, NEETs' addiction problems must be resolved upstream for Youth guarantee advisors since they consider it is not part of their job to take care of it. Here participation of a program can be hindered by the lack of interinstitutional coordination of public services.

- **Last but not least participation/participative research entails a *transformative character*.²⁵⁸ If participation is not related to the perpetuation or increase of the quality of life it seems to be a conventional social action rather than participation in a broader and transformative sense. It can be analysed as an interactive or as a public way of confronting perspectives and as such bringing in unmet needs. Insofar it can be seen - in its best sense - as the innovative character of participation. How is the transformative character addressed in your research or particularly from the youngsters' themselves?**

First, it should be recalled that participation as a means to social transformation is not the objective for any of the bouquet's programs studied here. It is not the legislator's intention; it is not carried out by the case managers and not perceived as such by users.

The analysis of the material revealed the weakness or absence of the capability for voice.

- Thierry: *and there is no solution offered you, including a shelter for example?*

- Elisa (micro high school): *no no nothing. I told her (the case manager) I was a sales person, I said I can not do this all my life, I have a baby, I want to get back to school. And she said, "well I do not know, you can not stop your CDI (employment contract)"...*

Our research method allows and support confronting views between dropouts and policy decision makers and implementers. During group discussions, the youngsters were able to

²⁵⁸ "(...) democratic inclusion [and participation] should not be understood in terms of adding more people to the existing order, but rather as a process that necessarily involves the transformation of that order (Biesta, 2009, p. 111)." (Vandekinderen/Roose 2014, p. 6)

highlight the barriers hindering further education while these brakes could be denied by institutional actors.

- "It takes money to attend further education" (Issam dropout Youth guarantee).
- "No no. (...) Public education is free in France. So until BAC+5 (master level) it is free (local mission president).

When they are pushed into a corner, i.e. the role of the researcher in CCAPPA, case-managers answer that this is "a matter of motivation" and that solutions exist for those who are looking for them like scholarships for example. The answer of the young people on this matter shows a lack of information, a form of non take-up by ignorance of their rights. This information was not sufficiently diffused or poorly adapted to deprived youth. Here again the limits of niti as a principle guiding public action can be traced.

Finally, in the course of the studied programs when a word is given to young people, the target is not transformative. The intention is more to ensure their compliance in the program than to make them full actors of it.

Magical stick as aspirations

When asked freely about their priorities, the youngsters speak of the possibility to have a sufficient financial capacity which appears to be the condition to get out of social vulnerability. But the dream does not hold even during the time of a discussion. Caught in their strike for survival, imagination is limited by a real pessimism regarding the future for them and their followers. This financial brake seems unbeatable. The means of living should not be ignored or underestimated by institutions at the risk of missing the capability for education target.

Finally this research has allowed to use interactive discussion to underline the conditions of a successful public action. Hence, the exchange of information on both sides can provide a mutual understanding of the reasons for failure and lack of expected behavior.

5.3 Research Methods: A methodological reflection

This fifth work package of SocIEtY is based on the development of new and participative research method. Since "The production of any knowledge is "an outcome of social position, location or situatedness producing a particular way the world is understood, the way questions are formulated, the methods chosen to answer the research question and the interpretation of the results" (Genat, 2009, p. 108). Therefore, it is important to understand the political dimension of generating knowledge, as participatory research (and also the theoretical perspective of the Capability Approach) has a commitment to social justice and social change. As a process of knowledge construction and production, doing research requires scrutiny and reflexivity by the researcher (Roose et al., submitted)." (Vandekinderen/Roose 2014,10).

The chosen method developed and tested by our qualitative research team is based on several aims.

- The first aim is to produce an original empirical material both in the usual sense of a material specifically produced for a designated research program; the second in the

sense of an unusual way of producing empirical material (new methodology). We have tried to assume these two aims in the proposed method.

- The second aim is to carry out the participatory dimension as far as possible. Introducing the beneficiaries (here dropped out youngsters) as participant to the research process supposes to go far beyond a formal presence in research and to turn the youngsters into associate members to the research team.
- The third objective is to ensure a strong and real capability for voice for youngsters in the research process. As mentioned in the French qualitative final report of the WORKABLE (FP7) program, the capability for voice is not a given and natural one. It supposes to be educated, worked out and trained. This is why the method we have used supposes to manage a training time in order to allow the building of a free and reflexive voice for youngsters.
- The fourth objective pursued here is to produce empirical data through the confrontation of points of view and not only by gathering a single discourse (through individual or collective interviews). We believe that through arguing and deliberating the situated truth of the stakeholders can emerge and/or evolve. This is why our method relies on a deliberative process (Risse, 2000). This process consists in having the beneficiaries, policy makers and policy implementers confront their point of views on a series of topics. It appears that, from the experience we have gathered through conducting these interviews, such a confrontation is unusual and that both the youngsters and the policy actors learned from each other (and of course this is a research result *per se*).



The program: we confront to public authorities. Ready?

5.3.1 Contradictory, Collective And Participatory Policy Analysis (CCAPPA): a method adapted from the sociological intervention

This section is dedicated to a description of the method used. This method – CCAPPA – is adapted from the French sociological intervention developed in the 80s by Alain Touraine. This method was “originally developed to explore social movements, social struggles that Touraine believed announced the creativity and conflict at the center of an emerging postindustrial society” (Mc Donald, 2002). It was later used in several other fields and in

connection with the sociology of experience as developed by François Dubet (Dubet, 1994).

We have adapted this method to policy analysis and assessment in line with the capability approach. To do so, we have kept the idea of constituting a « group » and to organise a indepth discussion with « interlocutors ». We have also used the principle of a group animation by 3 researchers one playing an empathic role with the group (the interpreter – Véronique Simon), one playing a comprehensive and provocative role (the analyst – Thierry Berthet) and one taking notes of all the debates (the secretary – Juliette Vollet).

We introduced several innovations. First, our aim is not to « recreate » a social relationship but to have the group of beneficiaries participate to the research process by collectively interviewing the interlocutors. Second, our objective is not to produce a participant's « conversion process » but to gather new forms of discourse and perception of the public action under study by confronting the point of views. Third, we do not conduct these interviews as a process implying several meetings, the stability of the group in time and an ongoing reflexive process. Rather, we concentrate all the work in a one day intensive process (see below). Fourth, in order to maximize a reflexive capability for the voice of youngsters we consider and tell the group that they are part of our research team for a day instead of being representatives of their institutional/social situation.

General description and rules

As mentioned in the earlier WP report we have chosen to problematize our research on the basis of the take-up (or non take-up) of a bouquet of public offer by youngsters. This means that after having identified the main existing solutions offered to dropouts, we have put under study three programs and the way they are accessed by dropped out youngsters.

Group and interlocutors

Three groups of dropouts have been set up, one for each program of the local bouquet. The constitution of the groups has been realized with a constant and strong commitment of the local organizations implementing these programs (Local mission for youth, Micro High School, Relay Insertion Pole).

The interlocutors have been chosen on the basis of their involvement in the programs under study or their role in the dropout process. The choice of interlocutors results from a deliberation between our research team and the group of youngsters.

Program under study	Group	Interlocutors	Date and place
Youth Guarantee	10 dropouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Local mission for youth and local elected • Youth hostel • Youth Guarantee counselor • Local mission counselor • Local representative of the state (sous-préfet) 	05/02/2015 Agen's local mission for youth and 01/05/2015 Agen's local mission for youth
Micro high school	10 dropouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PES counselor • Chamber of industry • Regional council • Ministry of education regional authority • Guidance center director • Chief education advisor 	09/02/2015 Agen's Micro High School
Insertion Pole	15 dropouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance center director • Relay insertion pole teacher and former pupil • Ministry of education local advisor for guidance • Ministry of education Dropout mission • Local mission for youth 	27/03 Agen's relay insertion pole (Baudre High school)

Turning dropouts into junior researchers

Two difficulties emerge when working with a group of vulnerable youngsters. The first is to get their interest and commitment in a research process. The second one is to make them feel secure that the institution they are questioning will not turn their own words against them. To overcome these two difficulties we are explicitly granting the group of dropouts a status of junior researchers for a day. Under this status, we inform them intensively about our shared research project, its hypothesis and analytical perspective; its aim and political outputs; we guarantee their freedom of speech and we involve them strongly to ensure their participation and engagement. Although we spent dense and hard working days, we have never experienced a demobilization of the youngsters. From 9 am to 7 pm, they remained intensively concentrated and active, surprising even their case managers and teachers. The granting of an enhancing role and a respected speech is so unusual for them!

In regard to this, the first words are crucial. The first meeting is important and we usually start by telling them that they matter and that we need their help to conduct our research. We share with them the belief that the youngster's voice is not really taken seriously into account by public institutions and then we offer them a limited but still interesting space of voice and recognition associated with the status of researcher.



LUNCH DEBRIEFING

Local mission for youth's group



Micro high school's group



PRI's group



A demanding method and an organizational challenge

If the CCAPPA consists in creating a deliberating stage for beneficiaries and policy actors, the backstage technical work is crucial for its success.

Setting up the stage

Organizing a CCAPPA requires a huge amount of preparatory work for the research team. After having identified the programs of the bouquet of public offer to be studied, contacts are made with their managerial staff in order to get their agreement and help in organizing the intervention (identification of the beneficiaries to be involved, booking of a venue)

The organization of the preliminary session is a key moment of the preparatory phase. During this preliminary session, the research team meets with the group of beneficiaries, explains the research process and the role there are going to play as junior researchers in it. The whole process is presented and discussed including the comparative European dimension, the research hypothesis, the possible outputs of the research and what is

expected from the CCAPPA. The timetable of the CCAPPA day is discussed and above all the group is asked about the interlocutors they wish to debate with.

As the final list of interlocutors is set up with the group during this preliminary session, it is important to manage sufficient time between this session and the CCAPPA session in order to ensure that the designed interlocutors will agree and be free to participate. It is also important to manage the logistical dimension (room availability, restaurant booking for the group, compatibility of the agendas, etc.).

Number and roles of the researchers involved

As mentioned earlier a team of three researchers has conducted these CCAPPA, each one playing a specific role. The *interpreter* is on the side of the group. He/she supports the youngsters' voice by adopting an empathic attitude and acting in a way to reduce the symbolic violence experienced by youngsters. The fact that Veronique Simon, the *interpreter* within our team, is a former dropout helped a lot in playing that role. The *analyst* plays his part from a distance. He reformulate the debates in analytical words, confronts the group and the interlocutors with their own contradiction. The *secretary* is above all in charge of capturing the debates and types them directly. Juliette Vollet, our secretary, is a doctoral student in sociology. She is writing a thesis on dropout experience. The generational proximity with the group is a great help and helps forming ties. She also participates in the debates and is free to intervene during them.

Participatory dimension: making choices

It is important to remind that the *group* is strongly associated to the research process. This participatory dimension is especially important when it comes to the definition of topics and interlocutors. During the preliminary session, the *group* is invited to discuss the topics and build the interview guide with the research team. We start from the problems of the program the youngsters are confronted to and progressively integrate the dimensions collectively raised by the SociEtY consortium in the interview guide.



The *group* also plays a critical role in defining the list of interlocutors. As a day of CCAPPA allows for a maximum of 4 interviews, the choice of the *interlocutors* is a strategic one. We usually come to the preliminary session with a list of names built on the basis of the partnership declared by the welcoming organization (Local mission, micro high school, relay insertion pole) and then this list is discussed and generally largely reshuffled with the young dropouts.

Typical proceeding of a CCAPPA: one day, six stages

After the preliminary meeting with the *group*, the CCAPPA starts with another meeting (*close session*) only with the group (1 hour). During this meeting we inform the group about the *interlocutors* we have succeeded to invite, we remind them with the rules of the CCAPPA (especially stressing that there is no personal accusations since we talk with institutions, and that as junior researcher they have to feel free to ask whatever they want to the *interlocutors*). Then two collective interviews (*open sessions*) with *interlocutors* are conducted (1 hour/each). Lunchtime together is reserved for debriefing and relaxation. After lunch two other collective interviews (2 hours) are done. The day ends with another *closed session* of our team with our junior colleagues (1 hour). During this important last stage, we first grasp their first impressions about this research experience, and then we get back to the information gathered on the chosen topics and raise some primary analysis about it.

One or two interlocutors at the same time?

Usually the interlocutors are met one by one in order to allow a targeted and deep discussion. But two interviews with two *interlocutors* at the same time have been experienced. These two persons, although belonging to different organizations or services, have to be linked by a specific set of topics to be addressed. However, the results are contrasted. For one case a positive dynamic was impulsed by the discussion between the two institutions represented by the interlocutors. For the other one the debate was poor and not really impacted by the duo of interlocutors. Our hypothesis is that the more the interlocutors are co-responsible with regard a specific matter, the more it works.

The end of the day is not the end of it: back office work

When the day of CAPPA is over, the backstage work continues. First, two documents are issued: the secretary's note and a full transcription of the debates (which supposes to pay special attention to the number and quality of the recording devices). On the basis of the documents and eventually of some graphic material (see below), the analysis is topical. It is related to the common set of SociEtY's questions and our own main policy analysis themes (access to the public offer, individualization, brakes and lever of implementation, territorial variable).

With a little help from pictures

In order to get further into research methodological innovation we have decided to experience the use of graphic material of two kinds.

The first consisted in asking a professional cartoonist to try and grasp the atmosphere of the CCAPPA and some of the striking points of the discussion. We invited Christian Durieux, a renamed cartoonist (http://www.futuropolis.fr/fiche_auteur.php?id_contrib=67943) to join us for the micro-high school CCAPPA. He spent the whole day working on our interviews and drew 36 original pictures (a selection is used to illustrate this report). The drawings were presented to the group and served as a support for discussion in the last closed session of the day. It should be reminded here that working with a cartoonist had a particular significance shortly after the slaughter of the French journal Charlie Hebdo's cartoonists in Paris.



The second experience we conducted was to ask for the help of a budding photograph taken from the *group*. During the preliminary session at the PRI (Relay Insertion Pole), we asked if one youngster would try to capture our forthcoming exchanges with photographs. We have been discussing a lot about trying to film or picture our debates with a professional but we agreed among the research team that it may be too intrusive and may introduce bias. We found that asking a youngster of the *group* to do it may be a solution. On one side we lost the capabilities of a professional to reproduce the atmosphere of the CCAPPA but on the other one this solution limited the problems for the interview dynamic.



5.3.2 Debating the method

Some questions, which may be addressed to this regard, are:

- **Did you identify bias and limitations in the selection of youngsters that were engaged in your participatory research?**

In our view the representativeness of youngsters is not biased by this method. First because it does not rely on the constitution of representative sample based on sociological variables. Second because the only representativeness targeted here is the participation to a policy

program. The youngsters constituting the group are all part of the program (sometimes they represent the entire population of the program in Agen), and they offer a large diversity of age, gender, ethnic origin and personal situations. As far as we know, the youngsters we met were not screened by the organizations in charge of the program (it should be reminded here that working closely with these organizations was the most efficient if not the only one way to get access to these dropouts). Neither did we get into any selection process of the *group*. All the youngsters have given an explicit agreement to voluntarily participate to the CCAPPA. Nonetheless it could be said that there may be a bias in participation since some youngsters have been asked by these organizations to attend without any possibility to refuse. Nonetheless, as soon as we started the CCAPPA we gave them the possibility to leave, and none of them did so. It should also be said that we did not receive any criticism about this experience from the youngsters and that they even have shown a remarkable enthusiasm in participation.

- **How did you deal with ethical issues, group dynamics and with the bias of your position as a researcher? How was the power issue addressed during the whole research process?**

Regarding ethical issues, some of them have been dealt with during the interviews. Some ethical matters have been discussed between the *group* and some *interlocutors* such as racial discrimination (especially on the labor market), generational discrimination (in recruitment and employment) and social discrimination (string pulling in job access).

In order to frame the group dynamic we benefitted from two elements: the number of researchers (3) to manage the situation and the fact that we invested the youngsters of a junior researcher status helped a lot in keeping them play a reflexive rather than emotional role (although we had sometimes but rarely to remind them of some interview rules). One key element should also be reported here. It is part of the method rules (even in the original sociological intervention model) to choose *interlocutors* from another geographical area so they do not have to deal with the youngsters individual cases. In other word, to ensure a debate through institutions, we make sure that the *group* and the *interlocutors* do not know each other (as much as possible, but sometimes it is not, when for example there is only one program of the kind for the whole region – micro high school). Finally, another way to deal with power and ethics has been to introduce humor in the research process. That was also one of the reasons to work with a cartoonist. Making a mockery of the interview situation was a good way to cool down some bitterness and play down some personal dramatic situations.

- **Issue of “normativity”: How did you communicate your normative view on what emerges? How did you explain and legitimise the political ambition of your research?**

The presentation of the research approach to the *group* did not go as far as presenting the normative dimension of the CA in epistemological terms. We discussed – often answering to youngsters’ questions – the issue of normativity in terms of the political usefulness of our research. While “transforming” the dropouts into junior researchers we explained how science contributes to change the perceptions of the public problems and bring to the forefront news solutions. We also told them that the aim of implementing a participatory

research is to expand the scientific knowledge on early school leaving by taking their voice into account seriously.

- **How were the results disseminated in a way that stimulate a democratic debate with social actors in our societies and is influential to policy and decision makers? How was the multi-perspectivity /multi-vocality preserved in the representation of the results?**

The dissemination of the results is a strong concern of our team. A dissemination meeting to the local stakeholders, including at first the youngsters we have worked, with is scheduled before summer 2015 bringing together the results of the qualitative research and those of the Q method.

It should also be stated that our first impressions, results and analysis have been systematically discussed with the youngsters during the last close session of each CCAPPA.

- **Research Process in terms of results of a process of collective inquiry which might have generated new knowledge (more appropriate, more democratic knowledge): To what extent has the overall process led to a enhanced, deeper, better knowledge on the debated issues?**

Although unintended, some changes can emerge from the research process itself and more specifically from the *group/interlocutor* interaction. Being confronted, in an unusual context, to the youngsters' voice and point of views can be a destabilizing experience for policy makers and implementers. But this interaction might also have an effect on the *interlocutors'* IBJJ through a better knowledge of the dropouts' concerns and on their knowledge of the program under study.

- **Whose agency has been enhanced? Who benefited (in which way) from the research? Did you engage the youth in other moments of the process, beyond gathering and discussing data? If so: how? What kinds of capabilities have been enhanced? Whose capabilities have been enhanced?**

It is very difficult to answer these questions and measure the side effects of a research process at that moment of its implementation. It is especially difficult to sort out the immediate effects of participatory research from long term and structuring effects on youngsters' capabilities and life path.

6. Conclusions

Our objectives in this case study were double sided. On the methodological side, we tried to move the focus from the institutional actors to the users in policy analysis and put them at the center of our field research. On the analytical side, this focus on beneficiaries have led us to study a bouquet of public offer and the way youngsters can access these programs.

To conclude on the methodological side, the development of a new set of methods and especially the trial of a new form of collective, contradictory and participatory interviews – the CCAPPA – have shown some added value. First, it allows confronting the point of views of institutional actors and users at the same time. As such, it authorizes meeting with a large

variety of actors in a short period of time. It engages also the participants (*group* and *interlocutors*) to debate, build arguments and if possible to develop a common deliberation on the issues at stake. Since the arguments of the youngsters are based on their practical experience of public policies, their questions go far beyond the ones usually raised up by researchers. Second, investing the youngsters of a “junior researcher” role helps releasing their voice and building a reflexive discourse on their relation to public institutions. One the issues raised by this participatory method is related to the fact that the interview guidelines have been set up with youngsters on the basis of their experience of the program under study. Their concerns are different from our common (SociETy consortium) and own (French team) questions. The results are then difficult to accommodate in a comparative perspective.

On the analytical side, our report is structured on the basis of the two principles of justice (the *Niti* and *Nyaya*) put forward by Sen. The work conducted here highlights the distinction between formal justice and concrete justice. In the words of Sen, the first relates to the functionings, the second to capabilities. Our observations show that when young people's experience shows the limits of *Niti* (procedural justice); the institutional actors and case managers continue to support their activity on this principle. Ultimately, their action aim to influence the behaviour of youngsters (by enhancing some functionings) more than changing the social and environmental conversion factors. Acting on these latter would constitute a true innovation. It would contribute to develop the real freedom of youngsters by going from formal to a concrete justice relying more on *Nyaya* (substantive justice). For the time being, it remains widely absent of our material.

Thus, if in our previous work (WP4), the active participation of dropouts is considered from the point of view of case managers as a key element for the success of the program, their definition of the term “motivation” keeps questioning. Because at best they do not know if young people can give their opinion, and when they know, the answer is no. If participation is understood as an opportunity to express their choices, the entry in some programs has nothing to do with a choice. Our young “one-day” colleagues point out the arbitrary nature of guidance towards vocational education or to a low skilled and low quality employment. The results of WP5 here confirm those of WP4.

Young people are promoting a socially acceptable way of acting rather than achieving their own individual profit. In this, and as we have seen, they are ready to reject what they see as pulling the string (get boost for jobs) when their interlocutors invite them to accept these behavioural rules. But the most vulnerable young people have suffered from this trust in institutions. Their reasoning is based on their experience. It reflects the limits of justice-based institutions.

For representatives of institutions, developing out of schools outside program could address inequalities generated within it. The programs studied here are trying to prevent the fall into social exclusion. But this action is not engaged through changing the existing (and accountable) institutions. The educational system is supposed to be fair, the responsibility is rejected on the pupil's behaviour and their non-compliant family. When the individual is not showing reasons for acting recognized as valid by the institution, then he/she is not heard. Lack of motivation is the first problem from the perspective of the policy makers and case

managers. Some young people have adopted this view. Thus, on one hand, the dichotomy between the two visions of justice – Niti for operators and Nyaya for young people – is not so clear in our material. On the other hand, the social construction of the self can be questioned too. Heteronomy in self-representation is often characteristic of the dominated. We note here that young people in precarious situations can share the informational basis of judgment where the responsibility for social vulnerability is the unreasonable person.

7. Policy-relevant implications

The empirical results presented in section 5-4 and in the WP3 and 4 national and local reports lead our team to propose the following general recommendations. The main statement on which they are based is that the French dropouts but more generally youth in France suffer from a lack of political, economical and social autonomy. Their “freedom to make the choices they have reason to value” remains strongly embedded by the familial and institutional ties. This lack of autonomy is an important factor of vulnerability since youngsters, especially after leaving school without any qualification, have a weak control over their own life path. It should also be mentioned that our study on national/regional youth policymaking and local support networks has shown that this lack of autonomy is transversal and relates to a multileveled weakness of youth policies.

Therefore our recommendations tend to increase youth’s autonomy and agency in multilevel perspective.

Starting from the individual/youngsters level, we recommend that youth public policies should aim at increasing their **vocational autonomy**; i.e. their ability to make the educational/professional choices they have reason to value. What should be developed at this level is their **agency capacity**. By this we mean their possibility to express their preferences and have them taken into account by the public institutions.

This individual vocational autonomy is conditioned by another form of autonomy to develop: the **operational autonomy** (could also be named as service delivering autonomy). We consider it as the best way to ensure that the institutional resources provided to youngsters can be converted into real freedom to choose. What should be developed for professionals at this level is their **discretion capacity**. By this we mean the possibility for counsellors and case managers to adapt the institutional resources to the individual situations and preferences.

The operational autonomy is embedded in another level autonomy: the **territorial autonomy**. Confidence in local support networks and their own forms or organization is a key feature to ensure the discretion of street level bureaucrats and the development of local initiatives. What should be developed at this level is the **subsidiarity capacity**. By this we mean organizing an effective bottom up process of policymaking aiming at stimulating the local innovation resources and an improved capacity to take into account the local specificities.

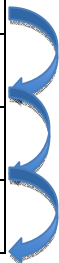
This territorial autonomy will not be reached so long as youth policy is not considered a fully autonomous policy field and remains split between existing domains (education, work,

training, housing health, etc.). As for gender equality policies, the mainstream character of youth policies (interministeriality) appears in the end as a weakness rather than strength. It introduces more complexity and blurring without a strong effect on youth vulnerability. Therefore we suggest articulating the three previous and embedded forms of autonomy (vocational, operational and territorial) into a last level of autonomy: the **sectoral autonomy**. By this we mean establishing youth policies as a full public action sector (i.e. with its own and mainly independent administration, set of perception, policy tools, interest organizations and modes of representation). Youth vulnerability as a public concern and an integrated approach of youth policies will be made more efficient if it is built on the basis of a strongly institutionalized youth public action field. What should be developed here is the **political capacity** of this domain of public action.

This general frame can be drawn in the following table:

Table: Youth autonomy development scheme

Type of autonomy	Level of action	Capacity to develop	Policy process
Vocational	Individual	Agency	People processing
Operational	Case managers and support networks	Discretion	Management
Territorial	Multilevel	Subsidiarity	Decentralisation
Sectoral	National/regional	Policy field	Governmental organisation



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CASE STUDY NETHERLANDS

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction. This section presents the focus of the SociEtY empirical research carried out in Amsterdam, namely an exploration of the aspirations and the capability to aspire of young people in Amsterdam. The various groups of respondents are introduced: a set of three groups of secondary school students (aged 12-17) located in three boroughs known to be subjected to a wide array of targeted social policies; a group of Spanish young adults who emigrated to Amsterdam since the crisis that severely hampered the occupational aspirations of Spanish people over the last few years; and finally a group of young adults who used to face a high degree of disadvantage and difficult circumstances at a young age and who were subsequently granted with opportunities to turn disadvantage into an asset for taking an active part in youth work.

Research questions and research design. Two sets of research questions were devised. On the one hand, we questioned the framing of aspirations and the opportunities for aspirations to blossom by asking young people directly. How do aspirations crystallise within young individuals? Focusing exclusively on educational/occupational aspirations of young people is short-handed and does not help to get a full picture of how young people frame a desirable and of the extent to which their aspirations are impacted by social inequality. On the contrary, we hypothesised that aspirational areas can be connected to each other and some other aspirational areas can be influential too. So as a methodological choice, we are investigating the aspirations of the various groups in an open way, unlike assuming that young people merely have educational and/or occupational aspirations and situating these against a wider set of aspirational areas. On the other hand, we questioned the role granted to experiential knowledge of peer workers, say: frontline youth workers who know about young people and about the area out of their own experience of living there and having been through many challenges young people are facing. As for research methods, the aspirations being a quite personal matter, we mainly resorted to narrative analysis deriving from one-to-one interviews as a first step. However, regarding the capability to aspire, it seemed to us that young people could possibly not be the only ones to be able to inform us, so we complemented the interviews – in the cases of New West, West and Zuid Oost – by

some interviews with frontline professionals who have had a long term commitment to these young people (teachers, mentors, social workers). As a second step, focus groups were planned.

Research findings. Three sets of research findings are presented in this report. First of all, our contribution to the conceptual refinement of the aspirations and the capacity to aspire is presented. Whilst researching the aspirations and the capability to aspire of young people sounded really adequate so as to highlight the added value of the capability approach for the study of the young people and social inequality in Europe, we soon noticed that there is a degree of conceptual confusion that was to be clarified prior to any further engagement in empirical research in the matter. Second, the preliminary findings of our empirical research on the aspirations and the capability to aspire of young people are presented. Third, our contribution to the conceptual refinement of the notion of experiential knowledge involved in community-based role-modelling and peer work is presented. The first and the last sets of findings are presented in section 4, while the second set is presented in section 5.

Conclusions and Policy recommendations. To begin with, our empirical findings suggest that the aspirational areas that really matter for young people facing disadvantageous circumstances are not just what is commonly heard as educational aspirations and/or occupational aspirations. Rather, these should be considered in light of other aspirations that are not unrelated but that are ranking beyond the mere prospect of an occupation. In addition, the opportunities offered to young people to consider a wider set of options regarding a 'desirable future' vary greatly from a young person to another. The circumstances in which the young people are embedded undoubtedly play a major role and seriously impact the ways young people project themselves in the future. Yet, strikingly, some young people rooted in rather similar social economic, cultural and geographical backgrounds happen to engage differently with the opportunities that are offered to them to formulate a desirable future. As such, questioning their capability to aspire proved to be a useful way to investigate the chemistry of agentic and contextual ingredients of the formulation of a desirable future and the framing of a 'good life'. Considering the voice of young people seriously would certainly entail that the IBBJ's informing youth policy-making and policy implementation take larger account of the aspirations of young people as well as their capability to aspire. Our findings suggest that initiatives meant to enlarge the range of freedom young people have in framing a desirable could contribute to reducing social inequality.

2. Introduction

Our research focuses on young people based in Amsterdam. We have a special interest in boroughs eligible for special measures falling under the local area-based join-up policy, which are known as areas where many young Amsterdammers people live. In particular, our research draws upon the situation of young people in the borough of New West (such as introduced in our WP4 report), but also the boroughs of West and Zuid Oost (south East, also known as the Bijlmer). As presented in our WP4 report, in New West, young people living in these boroughs are facing a wide range of (often combined) issues such as unemployment, low educational record, disruptive family environment, public order and debts. This borough is often presented in the media as a 'multiproblematic' area, which earns the New West area a poor reputation that happens to be detrimental for the labour prospects of its residents in general and youth in particular. There, governmental social policy is very present in the lives of residents. So it is in the two other parts of Amsterdam considered in this report: the borough of West (notably the Bos en Lommer district) and Zuid-Oost.

In our research, we looked at initiatives meant to provide extra support to young people for whom transition towards work is (or may turn out to be) problematic, notably the Weekend Academie, a community-based initiative²⁵⁹ aimed at providing extra support (over the weekend) for children (10-15 year olds) who are regarded as having 'a potential to be very successful' in spite of being faced to difficult circumstances (notably too little support at home regarding school assignments). Besides, taking the pupils seriously is an explicit intention of the Weekend Academie, which sounds well in line with the SocIEtY project.²⁶⁰ At the Weekend Academie, children are encouraged to explore their potential and their talents and to develop their skills. The support provided ranges from homework support to guest lectures provided by successful professionals suggested by the students. Students enrol on a voluntary basis for a period up to three years.

Since looking positively towards the future is an important goal, the Weekend Academie sounded like a good chance to discuss aspirations with young people, as well as their capability to aspire.

These issues – the aspirations and the capability to aspire of young people - were also addressed in two other settings, first among some students of a secondary school located in the borough of Zuid Oost and second among some Spanish young people who emigrated to the Amsterdam region over the last few years (since the crisis severely impacted employment prospects in Spain by the end of the 2000s). The Zuid Oost students are faced to rather similar social economic circumstances to those of the students involved in the Weekend Academie but they are not enrolled in such a programme that might foster their

²⁵⁹ The Weekend Academie initiative is community-based but is partly funded by the municipality of Amsterdam and private funding. The Weekend Academie started in 2006 and now operates throughout 10 sites located in different parts of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Haarlem and Almere, providing support to approximately 700 students per week. The initiative operates through the commitment of both staffed professionals and volunteer teaching forces.

²⁶⁰ It will be interesting to wonder what taking the young people seriously actually means!

capability to aspire. As for the Spanish young people immigrating to Amsterdam, their educational record is known as quite high, as a result of an intensive commitment to their studies, expectedly fuelled by ambitious occupational aspirations. Due to their international trajectory (as also their longer life experience compared to the secondary school students), we can question the relationship between migration and aspirations.

Another founding idea at the Weekend Academie is that of the positive role model, towards which we came across over our WP4 research: the Weekend Academie endeavours to provide its students with relevant and inspiring role models, 'someone he or she can look up to', as advocated by the founder of the organization, Oguz Dulkadir (see Weekend Academie website). But the Weekend Academie is no exception in this matter, numerous organisations – some governmental bodies included – resort to the idea of nudging young people towards 'good examples', for instance a young man who set up a kick-boxing school in a disadvantaged area. Beyond the Weekend Academie, we are questioning the recent attention granted to the idea of positive role models in the Netherlands and the expected benefits of their enrolment in social programmes for young people facing disadvantageous circumstances and difficult transitions in Amsterdam. This is done by exploring the experience of some young people (older youth though) as peer helpers, most of them starting from social economic circumstances quite similar to those of the young people based in New West, West and Zuid Oost.

So in sum, two main sets of research questions are addressed in this report.

On the one hand, we question the framing of aspirations and the opportunities for aspirations to blossom by asking young people facing disadvantage directly. Young Amsterdammers are also asked about the chances they have had to expand their capability to aspire and about their commitment towards the fulfilment of their aspirations. This entailed conceptual refinement, which is discussed in the section four of this report.

On the other hand, as an attempt to follow on our WP4 finding according to which community-based role models are granted with a special position in not only taking part in the implementation of youth policy but also by informing youth policy regarding the needs of young people facing disadvantage, we discuss peer work (or community-based role-modelling) as an opportunity for participation. Engaging in role-modelling as an occupation could indeed be seen as a double participation process:

1. Peer work as participation to youth work – and to social policy, to some degree - (through which people having been through disadvantageous circumstances and having been social/youth work clients 'convert' into 'helpers', thereby turning experience of disadvantage into an asset (well, that is the theory of course).
2. Peer work as participation in society in the wide sense by endorsing the values socially framed as 'positive' (inherent to a 'positive' role-model, according to role-model policy talk in Amsterdam). We question the process through which former 'problematic' young people who accept the 'role-model' label rework their

experience so as to become peer helpers (and the extent to which there is a value clash or not).²⁶¹

This allows us to address participation in the perspective of service-user participation and the transformative character of participation. This also some entailed conceptual refinement on role modelling and peer work, which is discussed in the section four this report.²⁶²

To these ends we held a couple of series of qualitative interviews with:

Young people registered at the Weekend Academie in New West (Osdorp district) and West (Bos en Lommer district) as well as their coach and a manager at the Weekend Academie.

Young people enrolled in a secondary school based in ZuidOost, so facing disadvantageous circumstances in the sense that they are living in a neighbourhood framed as 'multiproblematic' but who are not involved in such a supportive initiative as the Weekend Academie is meant to be (as well as one of their teachers) (n=20).

Young people from Spanish descent who emigrated to the Amsterdam region since the economic crisis (n=8).

Young people invited to act as community-based role models in Amsterdam (to come).

²⁶¹ In both of these cases the role models are in such a situation that challenges the perspective of programme implementation analysis (They cannot be merely seen as service recipients or policy officers/implementers). The perspective of this sub research project is thus slightly from the first sub research project.

²⁶² In particular, robustness is questioned on the basis of research into peer knowledge involved in self-help groups and peer work. Literature shows that there are some challenges (possibly ending up on shortcomings and flaws) with regard to resorting to experiential knowledge to inform and/or respond to social problems. To what extent is this taken into account? How far is a rather simple looking idea taken to respond to complex issues?

3. Research questions and research design

On the one hand, we question the framing of **aspirations** and the opportunities for aspirations to blossom by asking young people directly. How do aspirations crystallise within young individuals? To this end, qualitative research (individual interviews and focus groups) is carried out among two groups: young people based in the borough of New West and Spanish young adults based in the Amsterdam region. In our preliminary research, we learnt from the literature (Baillergeau & Duyvendak, 2013; Baillergeau, Duyvendak and Abdallah, 2015) that aspirations pertain to different areas, educational/occupational aspirations, but also political aspirations or consumption aspirations, social status and so on. Nevertheless we noticed a strong emphasis, in the sociological literature on aspirations, on educational/occupational aspirations. This is quite understandable since, generally speaking, there are high expectations regarding youth at societal level. Within the knowledge economy, young people are expected to take part in the labour market, and therefore to succeed accordingly in (formal) education.

Yet, we believe aspirational areas can be connected to each other and some other aspirational areas can be influential too. So as a methodological choice, we are investigating the aspirations of the two groups in an open way, unlike assuming that young people merely have educational and/or occupational aspirations and situating these against a wider set of aspirational areas. Therefore we are wondering: What are the aspirational areas that really matter? However, being invited to consider the 'youth perspective' on participation as a transformative and/or innovative process, we are mitigating the open-ended framing of our analysis of aspirations by inviting young people to talk about any aspiration for policy change. In case they do not mention spontaneously any aspiration for policy change (that could possibly be embodied in the endorsement of a political cause), they are questioned about the obstacles they (fore)see on the path towards the fulfilment of their aspirations. If any obstacle lies beyond their command (f.i. school, politics, and so on), they are invited to reflect upon such obstacles.

As reflected in our WP4 report, while assessing the construction of needs within the social support networks in New West, the notion of aspirations of young people proved absent of our respondents' narratives, as well as in the ways policy responses to disadvantageous situations are framed and implemented. However, this does not imply that aspirations are not considered tacitly, so we are exploring it further and discussing the matter with agencies involved in youth policy and/or practice at the grassroots level.

On the other hand, as reflected in our WP4 report, participation talk being highly popular, one could assume that youth policy would largely draw upon the narratives of the targeted young people. However, it does not seem so. At policy making level, it could be argued that the existing IBBJ largely relies on grey knowledge, deriving from semi-academic or non-academic research. At the level of policy implementation, the picture is slightly different. When asked about the origin of knowledge about social issues pertaining to young people, some respondents pointed, unsurprisingly, to statistically grounded categories designed to inform social/youth policy (reflected in policy documents and/or 'grey' literature), but this was not all. Many respondents from various backgrounds (local policy officers and frontline youth professionals) pointed to (or implicitly referred to) their own professional knowledge,

rooted in years of experience in working with young people. In addition, many respondents also pointed to the experiential knowledge of front-line professionals who happen to be peer workers, say: frontline youth workers who know about young people and about the area out of their own experience of living there and having been through many challenges young people are facing. But this has not to do with ensuring that young people actually take part in informing youth policy. On the contrary, Dutch youth practice rather resorts to/build upon - beyond building upon policy knowledge – the commitment of people on the edge between occupational expertise and peer knowledge. In the very case, people with a personal experience of disadvantage are increasingly enrolled as policy implementers, but also, as it seems, as policy informants. Notably it is claimed that these people have some knowledge of the aspirations of young people facing disadvantageous circumstances. In this, intimate experience of social problems is considered as a reliable source of knowledge to inform policy and practice. For some, it is even regarded as 'superior' to distant knowledge born by 'external' professionals (De Tolck & Hazekamp, 2014). So at the implementation level, the IJG is somewhat different than at the policy making level, drawing upon a wider set of knowledge, including a degree of peer knowledge. However one can wonder: does peer knowledge of disadvantage equate drawing upon the narratives of young people facing disadvantage? We wanted to explore this a step further by questioning the position of peers involved in youth practice.

As for research methods, the aspirations being a quite personal matter, we mainly resorted to narrative analysis deriving from one-to-one interviews as a first step. However, regarding the capability to aspire, it seemed to us that young people could possibly not be the only ones to be able to inform us, so we complemented the interviews – in the cases of New West, West and Zuid Oost – by some interviews with frontline professionals who have had a long term commitment to these young people (teachers, mentors, social workers). As a second step, focus groups were planned.

4. Research Findings

Research findings that are not discussed in section 5:

Conceptual refinement aspirations and the capability to aspire

WP3 and WP4 research gave us a chance to learn about whether or not policies addressing youth issues do explicitly consider the aspirations of young people as part of the 'informational basis' regarding the 'needs' of young people to be addressed in social/youth policy; and whether or not the capacity to aspire is explicitly enhanced or not. In contrast, WP5 research provides us with a chance to learn about the aspirations and the capability to aspire of young people from the perspective of the young people themselves. In order to facilitate the comparative work in that regard, you will find below (1) some suggestions for a definition of aspirations and the capability to aspire and (2) a set of questions to be addressed in our WP5 qualitative reports.

Aspirations are generally understood as the action of 'direct[ing] one's hope or ambitions towards achieving something' (Oxford Dictionary), as a broad view on how young people frame a desirable future, beyond dreams, expectations and educational/occupational prospects. Thus, aspiring involves projecting oneself into the future, and doing so as an agent (a person that takes an active role or produces a specified effect), rather than as an uncommitted object. Unlike dreams, aspirations have to do with commitments. Unlike expectations, aspirations are necessarily desirable for the individuals involved. Expectations, in contrast, can be less in line with an ideal future; they tell us more about what individuals (dare to) expect from life (what they can 'realistically' expect from life). Aspirations relate to voice in the sense that aspirations can be seen as a motive for exercising voice (no aspiration, no claim!). Unlike suggested in a wealth of literature focusing on educational/occupational aspirations of young people, aspirations of young people are not necessarily individualistic ('I want to be a soccer player' or 'I want to be rich'), they can also be of a collective nature, by pertaining, for instance, to family formation, or to the improvement of the situation of a group, a community. As a result, commitments towards the fulfilment of one's aspirations can happen to be collective (for example, exercising citizenship). Without presuming that collective aspirations are frequent or even dominant among young people facing disadvantage, it sounds important, for the sake of grasping their aspirations in a comprehensive manner, to leave the door open to the expression of collective aspirations that young people may have. At this stage it is also important to stress that aspirations are to be explored in a larger perspective than it is usually done with preferences, in the sense that they are to be considered beyond instant behaviour, the latter being embedded in a personal trajectory that should be considered as a whole in order to understand commitments (See Sen, 1985).

The capability to aspire: We view the formation of aspirations as a process, unfolding over adolescence and adulthood in which personal preferences build upon external triggers (preferences and/or experience of significant others). Some scholars have shown that aspirations are very personal and part of a process of identity formation. However, other scholars have argued that aspirations are impacted by contextual factors and by social inequality (Appadurai, 2004; Baillergeau, Duyvendak & Abdallah, 2015). Beyond considering

the chemistry of external influences and personal characteristics, another important aspect of the development of aspirations is the **degree of freedom young people have in formulating a desirable future**: do they merely pick up suggestions from their immediate surroundings (parents, teachers, role models) or from what mass medias invite them to consider attractive and then take them over for themselves, or do they have opportunities to discuss what a desirable future is – against a broad range of what other people think desirable – and then get a sense of reflexivity regarding what is a desirable future or a good life? One may also wonder: do they have any chance to build upon positive triggers (leading to positive aspirations – things they want to achieve) or do they merely draw upon negative triggers (leading to the formation of negative aspirations – things they really do not want to happen, for instance a criminal career)? So questioning the capacity to aspire young people have is to be viewed as a chance to consider the extent to which the formation of aspirations is embedded in some social processes and related to social interactions at various levels.

Conceptual refinement community-based role-modelling/peer work

Resorting to ‘experiential knowledge’ – inherent to the people facing a troublesome condition or disadvantageous circumstances – has indeed become a popular idea in governmental social policy in the Netherlands [references to Eigen Kracht and ervaringsdeskundigheid]. Increasingly, it is the point to appeal to all kinds of resources and talents people have and invest in their capacity to learn from their own condition and from the troublesome situations they have been through. From this, it is expected that the people can learn from their condition and that they can support themselves and help people ‘like them’ (reference community care, illustrations from the WMO turned into practice).

Aside from this trend in social policy (by the way not only pertaining to youth²⁶³), the Ministry of Safety and Justice as well as the Municipality of Amsterdam (De Jong, 2013 and 2014) expressed support to the idea of ‘positive role models’ in regard of measures meant for so-called ‘youth at risk’. As a matter of fact, a section of Dutch youth is commonly identified as worrisome because of low prospects on the regular labour market twined with low educational record and ‘risks’ of engagement in a criminal career. Hypothesizing that young people’s behaviour is influenced by the enthusiasm they grant to the conduct of inspiring others (drawing upon Merton’s understanding of social roles), the basic idea there is to offer, instead of (supposedly too influential) ‘negative role models’ – typically a friend or a sibling engaged in crime -, some ‘positive’ role models, that may be inspiring for young people, because of having been successful in overcoming the troubles the targeted young people are in, notably a capacity to make a living and to achieve a desirable social status (De Jong, 2013 and 2014). Beyond the policy area of crime prevention, the role model idea is also inspiring for a wide area of community-based initiatives, such as the Weekend Academie, addressing broader ranging issues such as transition towards work.

²⁶³ One should also note that, beyond the positive role model idea towards ‘youth at risk’, there is also, in the Netherlands, significant attention paid to the experiential expertise (‘ervaringsdeskundigheid’) granted to people having been through all kinds of issues such as homelessness, addiction, mental illness, disability, domestic violence and so on.

Whilst elsewhere role models are usually spontaneously identified by young people themselves, the idea there is to nudge young people towards 'positive role models' that fulfil a range of socially expected roles (becoming able to sustain one's life in a law-abiding fashion). One should also note that, whilst role models can prove very different from the young people (for instance an African American rock star or basket-ball player for young Europeans – or highly skilled professionals such as lawyers and medical doctors such as in the Weekend School project meant for young people from low-skilled background in Amsterdam), the leading idea there is that the suggested positive role models do share quite some features with the targeted young people, notably a commonality of geographical - if not ethnic - origin.²⁶⁴

As a consequence an increasing number of 'successful' young professionals coming from disadvantaged backgrounds are invited to become a positive role model for other young people. As a matter of fact, 'coming from the area' is increasingly an asset for young people willing to engage in a social or youth work career. Experiential knowledge is assumed to place 'peers' – persons having an intimate experience of what is framed as a social problem (disability; drug-use; sex work; early school leaving and so on) – in a favourable position to help fellows deemed to be 'vulnerable', notably by supporting them to become 'resilient'.

Arguably, for a long time, too little attention was paid to experiential knowledge in social policy and practice in regard of other types of knowledge of social problems²⁶⁵ in spite of their limitations and shortcomings. However, it is striking that the interest bestowed on community role models runs parallel to negative statements in the face of social professionals and all kinds of budget cuts in social/health care. Obviously, resorting to non-professional knowledge can prove a good chance not to have to resort to 'expensive' professionals to address social problems (reference Tonkens and others). So we wonder: to what extent is it beneficial for the target group? In what ways and to what extent does resorting to community role models help addressing/responding to the needs of young people facing disadvantageous circumstances? So the expected roles of community-based role models should be discussed (in particular in the perspective of participation) as well as the 'robustness' of experiential knowledge with regard to informing and addressing social problems which young people are facing.

²⁶⁴ One should note that other young people are invited to act as role models, notably students who are offered a rental flat in New West in exchange of some work in the surroundings.

²⁶⁵ When it comes to respond to 'social problems', there are other ways to inform policy and practice, drawing upon different sources of knowledge of social problems. Firstly, one can think of scientific knowledge – including statistical knowledge (but not only!). Typically, regarding crime issues, academic research has focused on criminal careers, searching for recurrent features in individuals and their proximate environments (family, neighbours, friends). Such data are used to inform crime prevention strategies. Secondly, one may think of clinical knowledge of social problems, born by professionals engaged in everyday practice regarding what is framed as social problems. Clinical knowledge is grounded in professional education and training – partly drawing upon scientific knowledge – and professional experience. Clinicians are bearers of specific knowledge accumulated over the years and nurtured by face-to-face observation and evaluation of persons facing social problems, in a 'personalised' relationship', as observed by Castel (1983) regarding medical physicians and mental health doctors and their patients.

5. Discussion, review and reflection

5.1. Aspirations and the capability to aspire

- **What kind of aspirations did you come across and were addressed? Educational/occupational aspirations/consumption aspirations/political aspirations/any other?**

The interviews with young people reflected a diversity of aspirations. However, educational aspirations and occupational aspirations came first in many interviews. This is not surprising since when young people are not often invited to reflect upon their views of a desirable future, if there is just a single opportunity in which they are invited to project themselves into the future, this opportunity relates to school (school itself or a school-related programme such as the Weekend Academie) where education is very much oriented towards diploma acquisition. By the way, the interviews all testify that the young people explicitly endorse the 'message' according to which getting a degree is a must (even though some respondents referred to the fact that some schoolmates don't care about this message and believe they will become rich by becoming a musician, just like suggested by some popular rock stars). In addition, the Weekend Academie explicitly aims at expanding the range of occupational options for young people (WEA coordinator). Besides, there may a research bias in the primacy of educational/occupational aspirations in the narratives of interviewees. Reflecting on one's ideas about a desirable future in a broad way being somewhat an abstract plan, the aspirations frequently has to be illustrated by some example at the beginning of the interview, and the example of a desirable occupation sounded most logical. So educational and occupational aspirations were first discussed, but subsequently the young people were invited to consider other forms of aspirations, this is why it is possible to discuss a wider set of aspirational areas in this report.

Occupational aspirations were discussed as an example of young people's ability to project themselves in the future. Educational aspirations were framed as a route towards the fulfilment of occupational aspirations (in line with prevailing views in the matter in the Netherlands). All young people expressed ideas about this, and none was found not to have any occupational aspiration nor very vague set of occupational aspirations that would sound inconsistent. However, different sides of occupational aspirations were highlighted as important by the young people: job stability; chances to be 'very busy'; chances to create many contacts over work. These different aspects of occupational aspirations connect to other aspirations ranging beyond the core of occupational aspirations, notably personal/family life (having offspring and/or spending time with kinship), social status, (high) income/consumption capacity.

Family life was frequently expressed as an as much valuable aspiration as occupational aspirations, and often even more valuable. Yet, having an interesting and rewarding job was framed by some respondents as beneficial beyond occupational life, including family aspirations.

In most narratives the political aspirations were strikingly absent, even though young people were explicitly asked about this by researchers and some – the Zuid Oost sample – were encouraged by teachers to reflect upon societal issues and engaged in some activities such as visiting a court audience. One respondent even referred to politics as ‘these things young people are not interested in’, thereby suggesting that the lack of interest in politics is the norm among young people. Other norms that was referred to by some respondents whose school is located in a disadvantaged part of Amsterdam are achieving a high income as well as becoming famous (although these respondents took pains to distance themselves from these norms, notably by mitigating the high income aspirations with an aspiration of good working conditions).

So our empirical findings suggest that the aspirational areas that really matter for young people are not just occupational aspirations, or, at best, these should be considered in relation to other aspirations that are related but ranking beyond the mere prospect of an occupations.

- **Did you learn about the chances (or the lack of chances) for young people to expand or alter their capacity to aspire? If yes, who informed you and how? In how far do your respective policies and practices go beyond the reconstruction of immediate needs and wants, of adapted preferences of youngsters and immediately available capacities? What is the relation between policies and preferences of young people?**

Secondary school students informed us about their capability to aspire by reflecting upon how and where they got inspiration for what kind of direction they would like to head towards, beyond their current study track, and to relate to what their aspirations were when they were younger (a ‘dream job’ - if they can recall any). Other respondents (teachers, coaches at the Weekend Academie) informed us about some opportunities offered to students so as to discuss - and possibly refine - their aspirations, thereby allowing the researchers to compare the respective narratives on the opportunities to alter the capacity to aspire.

Schooling seemed to provide some chances to expand the capability to aspire of young people, notably compulsory attendance of pupils to **open day sessions** provided by higher educational institutions. This proved to be mentioned as a chance to broaden the scope of what is possible beyond the occupations of parents and beyond previous aspirations (example SGR-I-girl, from hairdresser to media & entertainment). School **mentors** also proved to be inspiring for some children (OSD-I-boy) – but not all, either by suggesting some inspiring ideas (beyond their own experience) or by becoming a role-model for the ‘mentored’ young people. Some teachers also happen to be regarded as inspiring, notably by providing information on how to reach occupational aspirations (OSD-I).

However, some secondary school students indicated some **missed chances** for school to broaden the scope of a desirable future. For instance some teachers don’t inspire the pupils beyond their own subject and some mentors prove not inspiring at all (SGR-I-girl).

The Weekend Academie proved to be inspiring as well, by providing some information on how to move closer to occupational aspirations as well as organising guest lectures featuring professionals (suggested by young people) willing to introduce the young people to their occupation [provisional].

- **On the basis of your case study data, to what extent are aspirations and the capability to aspire impacted by social context? What kind of contextual elements were influential?**

Aspirations seem to be impacted by social context but so more for some young people than for others. Some young people indicated not to be inspired by their family or by their personal commitment (hobby) but rather by chances offered elsewhere. In addition, it seemed that school and/or initiatives such as the Weekend Academie tend to 'correct' the impact of the (family) social context.

- **In case you came across some attention paid (on the policy side) to the aspirations of young people in your WP3 or WP4 research, to what extent are the perspectives of young people on aspirations in line with your WP3 and WP4 findings?**

Not much explicit attention granted to aspirations of young people on the policy side or, at most, that young people should have some aspirations for a legal job and hence getting a post-secondary-school degree. Most narratives suggest that this message was adequately handed over to young people.

5.2. Substantial freedoms of participation

Our empirical research informs two aspects of participation. First, **service-user participation**, in the sense that the experiential knowledge of disadvantageous circumstances of some young people is praised in such a way that they are invited to take part in youth work as peer workers. Therefore, we can discuss the substance of this participation, and also, to some degree, its **transformative character**.

Further to our WP4 finding according to which community-based role models are granted with a special position in not only taking part in the implementation of youth policy but also by informing youth policy regarding the needs of young people facing disadvantage, we discuss peer work (or community-based role-modelling) as an opportunity for participation. It seems to me that it could be seen as a double participation process:

1. role-modelling as participation to youth work (through which people having been through disadvantageous circumstances and having been social/youth work clients 'convert' into 'helpers', thereby turning experience of disadvantage into an asset (according to the theory).

Enrolment in youth work results from a process through which young people with a troublesome history (lack of perspective, petty criminal career and related issues such as stigma and discrimination) become helpers and/or social workers. However such a form of participation may cover various degrees and modes of participation. Some peer workers merely use their experience to pass on top-down framed messages to the targeted young people such as 'go to school and get a degree' or 'build upon your own talents to increase

your chances on the labour market'. In some other cases, experiential knowledge is framed as an alternative way to carry out youth work, which clashes with institutional youth work (De Tolk & Hazekamp, 2014; Van Gemert, 2014).

2. role-modelling as participation in society in the wide sense by endorsing the values socially framed as 'positive' (inherent to a 'positive' role-model in role-model policy talk in Amsterdam). We question the process through which former 'problematic' young people who accept the 'role-model' label rework their experience (and the extent to which there is a value clash or not).

5.3. Research Methods: A methodological reflection

- **Did you identify bias and limitations in the selection of youngsters that were engaged in your participatory research? (“Tragedy of youth work” in the research project: Representation only of those who show up: Problem of SELECTIVE BIAS concerning the youngsters: only research on people who ARE there; what about those who are NOT there; Non-participants are invisible)**

Yes in a way, since it was not possible to conduct ethnographic research and too early (field not ready) for a full sociological intervention research design. So in our case young people were approached through institutions who ‘take care’ of them, notably educational institutions. As a result, most of the interviews reflect a strong emphasis on educational or occupational aspirations. We tried to mitigate the potential bias by asking a diversity of young people (some involved in some additional programmes such as the Weekend Academie for which high motivation is required – at least from the side of parents! - and some not involved in such programmes) and some talks with care takers. Again, some bias could not be avoided because the secondary schools of the areas under investigation proved difficult to convince to engage in the research. Eventually, the secondary school students who took part in the research were enrolled through one of their teachers, who proved to be particularly keen to foster social reflexivity among his students. So all in all, the settings applying to the various groups of respondents and the recruitment methods were not completely different. However there is a nice diversity in the narratives which enabled a good testing of our research questions on the aspirations and the capacity to aspire and how they connect to social inequality and disadvantage.

- **How did you deal with ethical issues, group dynamics and with the bias of your (boundary) position as a researcher (being the “other” or “better” social workers; as Voice facilitators; Hidden competition between researchers and experienced youth workers; paternalistic intervention; power imbalances between insiders-outsiders, experts-non experts; age and gender differences)? How was the power issue addressed during the whole research process?**

Full transparency with regard to introduction of the purpose of the research and ensuring conditions in which young people feel comfortable to talk about personal matters (aspirations researched through the format of one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups). We also ensured full anonymity prior to recording any interview.

- **How did you “leave the field” and conclude the action or research process?**

We have not left the field yet, for some observations are still going on. In addition, the study of aspirations being a central focus of our research, a quite personal matter, we decided to proceed to one-to-one interviews as a first step. Our plans for the ‘leave the field’ phase is to submit our preliminary findings to a panel of people involved in the research so as to hear about their comments. Based on these comments, the present report will be finalised. A short article (in Dutch) will be offered to a local newspaper.

6. Conclusions & Policy-relevant implications

To begin with, our empirical findings suggest that the aspirational areas that really matter for young people facing disadvantageous circumstances are not just what is commonly heard as educational aspirations and/or occupational aspirations. Rather, these should be considered in light of other aspirations that are not unrelated but that are ranking beyond the mere prospect of an occupation. In addition, the opportunities offered to young people to consider a wider set of options regarding a 'desirable future' vary greatly from a young person to another. The circumstances in which the young people are embedded undoubtedly play a major role and seriously impact the ways young people project themselves in the future. Yet, strikingly, some young people rooted in rather similar social economic, cultural and geographical backgrounds happen to engage differently with the opportunities that are offered to them to formulate a desirable future. As such, questioning their capability to aspire proved to be a useful way to investigate the chemistry of agentic and contextual ingredients of the formulation of a desirable future and the framing of a 'good life'. Considering the voice of young people seriously would certainly entail that the IBJJ's informing youth policy-making and policy implementation take larger account of the aspirations of young people as well as their capability to aspire. Our findings suggest that initiatives meant to enlarge the range of freedom young people have in framing a desirable could contribute to reducing social inequality.

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CASE STUDY ROMANIA: The Romanian youth in finding the way to be heard ... by whom? A photovoice exercise

Dr. Adrian Dan, Dr. Marian Ursan, Oana Banu

1. Abstract

The participatory research took place within an illegal camp of recently evicted families, mostly Roma ethnics. Over 100 people (27 families) living in a yard of houses in Bucharest, were evicted on September 2014. The research team designed a research using photovoice as a method, involving 10 youngsters (finally we had only 7) from this community, focusing on topics like important things in their life; social relationships - group of friends / family; education; employment - future aspirations,; the importance of education in finding a job; involvement / participation in community life. The main conclusion drove toward the fact that for youngsters, the family is the **cornerstone**. All their values, dreams, aspirations, needs are gravitating around family and mostly in the absence of any agency/ institutional support.

2. Executive Summary

The participatory research took place within an illegal camp of recently evicted families, mostly Roma ethnics. Over 100 people (27 families) living in a yard of houses in Bucharest, were evicted on September 2014.

The research team approached the people in the area, having extensive discussions with adult people and youngsters, as well as mediating the conflict and facilitating negotiations with local authorities. The lack of cooperation between the two conflicting parties made many victims among evictees who refused the accommodation solution proposed by the Local Authorities and continued to live in the street, also during the harsh winter. In this context we decided to try to hear the voice of the young people, not only about the current situation, but mainly about their perception and perspectives in making their voice hearable by decision makers mostly regarding their chances to access quality education and job market.

The participants of PhotoVoice consisted in a total number of 10 Roma ethnics youngsters, aged 16 – 20 years old, most of them part of the group evicted from Vulturilor Street and nearby, district 3rd of Bucharest. The recruitment plan was conducted in collaboration with Carusel Association, an organization active in the area by providing social services. In order to select the participants, the interviews took place nearby the places of residence, in the neighbourhood, so the participants could have the full control to express their interest and concerns related with this process.

The driving research questions were linked mainly to work & education and relation between them:

- 1) What is your opinion on the youth labour market access?
- 2) What do you think is the role of education in finding a job?
- 3) How do you think the result of professional training courses can help young people in finding a job?
- 4) Do you think that non-formal education (explanations about non-formal education) may have a role in helping young people to have access to the labor market? (Explain)
- 5) What about (re) introducing apprenticeship programs for young people?
- 6) How do you think you can succeed in acquiring a first professional experience?
- 7) Do you think backgrounds affect access to the labor market?
- 8) What do you think about consulting young people in policy development (education, labor market etc.) topics which directly concern them?
- 9) What measures do you think can be taken to avoid unemployment among young people?
- 10) Do you think young people from disadvantaged backgrounds measures should be taken different / special in terms of reducing unemployment / access to the labor market?

The main findings were focused on some topics:

Inequality and disadvantage. One of the first intriguing findings was related to inequality and disadvantage but not talking directly & only about their disadvantage but also by others. The young people argued that not only they & other peers of them are disadvantaged and marginalized but many other vulnerable groups, like elderly and disabled. Even for the moment the young people are disadvantaged in the long run they argued that have better chances to succeed as comparative with elderly which sometimes are forced to beg in the street affecting their human dignity.

Poverty, lack of job, hopeless, dependency by minimal state aid were well spotted in two different pictures made by David and Emi, which is sending a message to policymakers to address the issue of excluded people, to develop programs for inclusion. Explaining the meaning of their pictures the youngsters tackled also the problem of enrichment by corruption.

Following the discourse about lack of willingness of society and in charge social institutions to help in need people and families, the main idea of youngsters focused on family values and family support as the main agent in helping its members in crisis situation. The focus on family as a centered value reflects not only a more general trend among youngsters in Romania, but particularly in our group of young people. It is not only a kind of subsidiarity (family / relatives / friends/ community/ state agencies) when young people think about/ are confronted with problems, but a desperate awareness of the fact that most of the times behind of (failure) family support is merely nothing or only a scriptic entitlement to rights embedded in a huge bureaucracy.

Based on our photovoice exercise (but we can extensively extrapolate our conclusions to overall young population and not only), the social policies and practices do not take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously. Even there are governmental strategies and programs addressing the issue of wide social integration of young people, in practice the things are slightly different.

Youngsters experiential knowledge, even limited due to lack of information, participation and opportunities, reflects some fundamental aspirations and conceptions of justice which are very few articulated, heard and contested in social policies and practices as well as in other aspects of their daily lives.

In terms of participation, the young people are perceiving it mostly through the lens of family and school. Volunteering could be a very good example for others to share their resources, like David which was doing volunteering in a school for pupils, and talking about “No hate speech”, or Timotei's sister who does volunteering (making donuts) for the children from the church. The school is seen as the most important 'vehicle' driving ones life to success and prosperity, to be respected and integrated in society. But school is sometimes a very abstract agency and it make sense for young people through the teachers but not necessarily the knowledge that they can achieve.

3. Introduction

The Romanian case participatory research took place in the district 3 of Bucharest, near to city centre, within an illegal camp of recently evicted families, mostly Roma ethnics. Over 100 people (27 families) living in a yard of houses on 50 Vulturilor Street, Bucharest, were evicted on September 15, 2014. Among those targeted were children & youngsters, elderly persons, people with disabilities. The evictees had at the eviction moment no real alternatives for relocation, according with the Common Front for Housing Rights. The evicted people consider the treatment of local authorities a blunt breakage of their rights and a racist act given that most of the evictees identify as Roma. Most of the tenants have been living in the 50 Vulturilor Street for 20 years, having been accommodated in that nationalized dwelling in the beginning of the 1990s by the state companies for which they worked. Since the 2009 theirs tenancy contract expired and the new owner did not renew it and up to now the tenants have been living in those homes without a legal contract. Not having the possibility of renting or buying apartments on the market solely by their own resources, the majority continued to live (2009-2014) in the houses from which they had been told they were going to be evicted. Among the 100 people evicted were many young people, many of them enrolled in the school (some of them in the “*Second chance*” programme) and some others looking for a job while only few have a low-paid job.

The research team approached the people in the area, having extensive discussions with adult people and youngsters, as well as mediating the conflict and facilitating negotiations

with local authorities. The lack of cooperation between the two conflicting parties made many victims among evictees who refused the accommodation solution proposed by the Local Authorities and continued to live in the street, also during the harsh winter. In this context we decided to try to hear the voice of the young people, not only about the current situation, but mainly about their perception and perspectives in making their voice hearable by decision makers mostly regarding their chances to access quality education and job market.

The Photovoice approach was a good option because it is participatory in its essence. Being disadvantaged / socially excluded does not necessary suppose lack of access to various resources but sometimes the access to such resources is driving the beneficiary to a deep dependency, lack of self-support and self-exclusion. Photovoice is a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach that makes the people to express their voices and concerns related with the life, setting and aspirations, from the perspective of the inhabitants (Wang, 2003). In our particularly research, Photovoice have been use to create a proper environment in order to assess and reflect the youths life, promote critical dialog and raise awareness about community concerns, inform and promote innovative changes. Photovoice facilitates the improvements at personal and community levels, empowers individuals and communities, in order to enable them to point solutions and participate in all the stages of community change initiative. (Wang & Pies, 2008).

The participants of PhotoVoice consisted in a total number of 10 Roma ethnics youngsters, aged 16 – 20 years old, most of them part of the group evicted from Vulturilor Street and nearby, district 3rd of Bucharest. The recruitment plan was conducted in collaboration with Carusel Association, an organization active in the area by providing social services. In order to select the participants, the interviews took place nearby the places of residence, in the neighbourhood, so the participants could have the full control to express their interest and concerns related with this process. In order to select the participants, several criteria (Powers, Freedman, & Pitner, 2012) have been established: (1) Residents of the camp recently evicted from 50 Vulturilor Street of nearby area. (2) Age appropriate for the focus group, 15 – 29 years of age. (3) Ready to share ideas about how to improve the situation of young people. (4) Drew in learning how to use a camera and/or want to improve their photography skills, (5) Enjoy working in groups, (6) Willingness to share their time to participate in the project.

Several policy areas have been taken into account - education, employment, work and social assistance supporting self-determination, participation/ involvement etc.

Thematic analyses have been conducted in collaboration with the participants in several steps over the course of the project. Through both inductive and deductive thematic analysis we identified the emergent themes aligned nicely with and supported existing theories in the literature. After each photo shooting process was done, the research team conducted sessions of discussions with all participants; each photo was analysed and accompanied by stories / messages. The aim of the session was to realize a 'macro-picture that underlines there are also others in their situation and appropriate to intervene at this level. All the pictures have been printed on special boards displayed during the

confrontation phase. The confrontation was organized in the premises of the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, with the participation of the young people involved in the Photovoice process and other key stakeholders.

The proposed and tackled themes were focused on:

- Important things in my life
- Social relationships - group of friends / family
- Lifestyle and leisure - hobbies etc.
- Education - education in the family, education system, teachers, peers, non-formal education
- Employment - future aspirations, intention to immigrate, the importance of education in finding a job
- Importance of health and access to health care services
- Risk behaviour (alcohol, drugs, unprotected sex etc.)
- Involvement / participation in community life

4. Research questions and research design

Several policy areas have been taken into account - education, employment, work and social assistance supporting self-determination, participation/ involvement etc. in Vulturilor area. In order to achieve these objectives, prior to photovoice we undertook: documentary review / analysis of European / national policy / legislative documents, scientific reports / research, secondary data analysis and national statistics, local electronic press - to provide a contextual overview.

We realised some group discussions with different types of youth (highly / poor educated; employed / unemployed; Roma / Romanians etc.) from Vulturilor street as well as stakeholder (public / NGO) and professionals. After each photo-session (corresponding to a main topic, discussed with young people before photo session reprise) the research team had extensive discussions with youngsters in order to catch the main ideas as well as to clarify the problems.

The driving research questions were linked mainly to work & education and relation between them:

- 1) What is your opinion on the youth labour market access?
- 2) What do you think is the role of education in finding a job?
- 3) How do you think the result of professional training courses can help young people in finding a job?
- 4) Do you think that non-formal education (explanations about non-formal education) may have a role in helping young people to have access to the labor market? (Explain)
- 5) What about (re) introducing apprenticeship programs for young people?

- 6) How do you think you can succeed in acquiring a first professional experience?
- 7) Do you think backgrounds affect access to the labor market?
- 8) What do you think about consulting young people in policy development (education, labor market etc.) topics which directly concern them?
- 9) What measures do you think can be taken to avoid unemployment among young people?
- 10) Do you think young people from disadvantaged backgrounds measures should be taken different / special in terms of reducing unemployment / access to the labor market?

All the youngsters from the target group have been provided with digital cameras and they were stimulated to make photos on different themes, accompanied by stories / explanations. The stories / explanations have been exposed to the whole participants during the weekly meetings. Part of the pictures and stories has been selected by the participants, part of them by the research team. The selected pictures have been used to be exposed during the final confrontation with the key stakeholders.

The purpose of these techniques is to learn how to place a day in their life and in pictures, not just verbal, which will add valuable information to our research including the CA approach. The format for reflecting on the photographs is to respond in writing (a “free write”) to the following questions (which are referred to by the acronym SHOWeD): What do you see here? What’s really happening here? How does this relate to our lives? Why does this problem or asset exist? What can we do about it? (Wang, 2003; Wang & Burris, 1994). The methods employed in our research project were approved by the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work. In order to proceed with the Photovoice community-based participatory research, have been undertaken, such as:

Recruitment

The recruitment process of young people was conducted in collaboration with the Carusel, an organization active in the area by providing social services. The idea of making a photovoice was promoted within community, among young people, who expressed their interest to participate and then all the applications have been analysed. Part of the applicants have been invited for interviews in a place nearby the residence, in the neighbourhood, so the participants could have the full control to express their interest and concerns related with this process. In order to select the participants, several criteria (Powers, Freedman, & Pitner, 2012) were followed: (1) Residents of the camp recently evicted from 50 Vulturilor. (2) Age appropriate for the focus group, 15 – 29 years of age. (3) Ready to share ideas about how to improve the situation of young people. (4) Drew in learning how to use a camera and/ or want to improve their photography skills, (5) Enjoy working in groups, (6) Willingness to share their time to participate in the project.

Procedures

As it was planned, we met with the youth starting early December for weekly sessions over 8 weeks, in the afternoon. Each session was co-facilitated by the representatives of Carusel. All the participants have been provided with digital photo cameras and specific request have

been made in order to shot certain aspects of their own life but in accordance with the pre-determined themes. Every meeting had a theme, priory discussed and established with the participation of the target group.

Participatory Data Analysis

The research team paid a careful attention to use a community-based participatory research approach in the data analysis of this project. Thematic analyses have been conducted in collaboration with the participants in several steps over the course of the project. Through both inductive and deductive thematic analysis we were able to identify the emergent themes aligned nicely with and supported existing theories in the literature. At the end of the process, the research team organized a group meeting. The aim of the session was to realize a macro-picture that underlines if there are also others in their situation, and what is considered to be appropriate to intervene at this level. All the pictures have been printed on special boards in order to be displayed. In order to organize a debate on the situation of young people, an event was organized in the premises of the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, with the participation of the young people involved in the Photovoice process and other key stakeholders.

5. Research Findings

Inequality and disadvantage

One of the first intriguing finding was related to Inequality and disadvantage but not talking direct and only about their disadvantage but also by others. The young people argued that not only they and other peers of them are disadvantaged and marginalized but many other vulnerable groups, like elderly and disabled. Even for the moment the young people are disadvantaged in the long run they argued that have better chances to succeed as comparative with elderly which sometimes are forced to beg in the street affecting their human dignity:

„In this picture I'm giving an old beggar some food. I can't stand to see older people in the streets, sick and cold, begging, because I think of the fact that I also have older relatives at home and that we all have. And we would not like it if our older relatives would end up like them. Many are made to beg by swindlers, and they are everywhere, even abroad. Others beg to obtain money for alcohol. I don't agree with giving money to young people who'd rather keep their children in the cold instead of going to work for their sake. Why are they having children? To make them beg? I help older people in the streets because I'm outraged about the fact that no one helps them. If you would give them a chance to stay in a retirement home, a shelter; some would stay, but there are others would return to the streets and continue to beg. But I wish they would at least get the chance, they should not be left in the streets, unheeded and mocked.” (Amir)



Amir

In poartă sunt să dădă de mearcă una bătrână comă. Nu suport să văd bătrâni bolnavi în stradă și în frig, cenză, pentru că mă gândesc că și eu am bătrâni acasă și tot de înțeles am. Și nu ne-ar conștienta dacă se moartă să ajungă ca să. Mulți demotivi sunt părinți și organizații de protecție, care sunt pentru că și pentru hoșii. Alții conștient pentru a obține bani de la stat. Nu sunt de acord să dau banii înțelegeri ca să pot să-i plătesc în frig pentru că ei în toată viața au săvârșit să munțască pentru ei. Pentru că în viața lor? Ca să-i bagă în cenză? Și să-i bătrâni de pe străzi pentru că sunt nevoiți să-și mearcă nu fac nimic pentru ei. Sunt bătrâni care dacă îi ar de parca în un săd, sădăd, nu mă prea, dar sunt și alții care au înțeles în stradă la cenză. Chiar pentru că parca dădă și în dădă mearcă să-i să dăd o gramă, nu să-i sădă în stradă, nebagăți în șanșă și bagăceni.

In the picture I'm getting old beggar some food. I can't stand to see older people in the streets, sick and cold, begging, because I think of the fact that I also have older relatives at home and that we all have. And we would not like it if our older relatives would end up like them. Many are made to beg by welfare, and they are everywhere, even at road. Others beg to obtain money for alcohol. I don't agree with giving money to young people who'd rather keep their children in the cold instead of going to work for their sake. Why are they leaving children? To make them beg? I help older people in the streets because I'm outraged about the fact that no one helps them. If you would give them a chance to stay in a shelter or home, a shelter, some would beg, but there are others who would return to the streets and continue to beg. But I wish they would at least get the chance, they should not be left in the streets, unhelped and mocked.



On the other hand Amir is blaming the behaviour of some parents that force their children to beg in the street. The same idea is expressed by David, who is catching with camera two children

„... who are made to beg and look for iron by their parents. Their parents are like this: we have a child, we receive his pension and allowance and they live on that. Romanian authorities have to change the situation of the children, children should be at kindergarten or at school. Instead, they are on the street. I would go home to the parents with the Child Protective Services. If they don't take care of them, we take them and take care of them.” David

David

In această poză sunt copii care sunt puși de părinții lor să cerșească și să caute fiare. Părinții lor sunt cam așa: avem un copil, luăm pensia și a locația lui, și din asta trăiesc. Autoritățile României trebuie să schimbe situația copiilor, copiii ar trebui să fie la o grădiniță și la o școală. În loc de asta, ei sunt pe stradă. Eu aș merge acasă la părinți cu protecția copiilor. Dacă nu au grijă de ei, îi luăm noi și îi îngrijim.

In this picture there is some children who are made to beg and look for iron by their parents. Their parents are like this: we have a child, we receive his pension and allowance and they live on that. Romanian authorities have to change the situation of the children, children should be at kinder garden or at school. Instead, they are on the street. I would go home to the parents with the Child Protective Services. If they don't take care of them, we take them and take care of them.

SociETY | European Union | Ministry of Labour, Human Resources Development and Social Protection | Child Protective Services

The same idea of vulnerable and excluded people it was grasped by another participant, Andreea, which is picturing a hopeless homeless. Even Andreea doesn't know how wide / small is the dimension of homeless in Bucharest / Romania, she is catching at common sense what was documented in various studies – that the number of homeless in Romania is not as big as comparative with other countries but there is a huge deficit of services for this vulnerable group (Dan, 2009; SamuSocial)

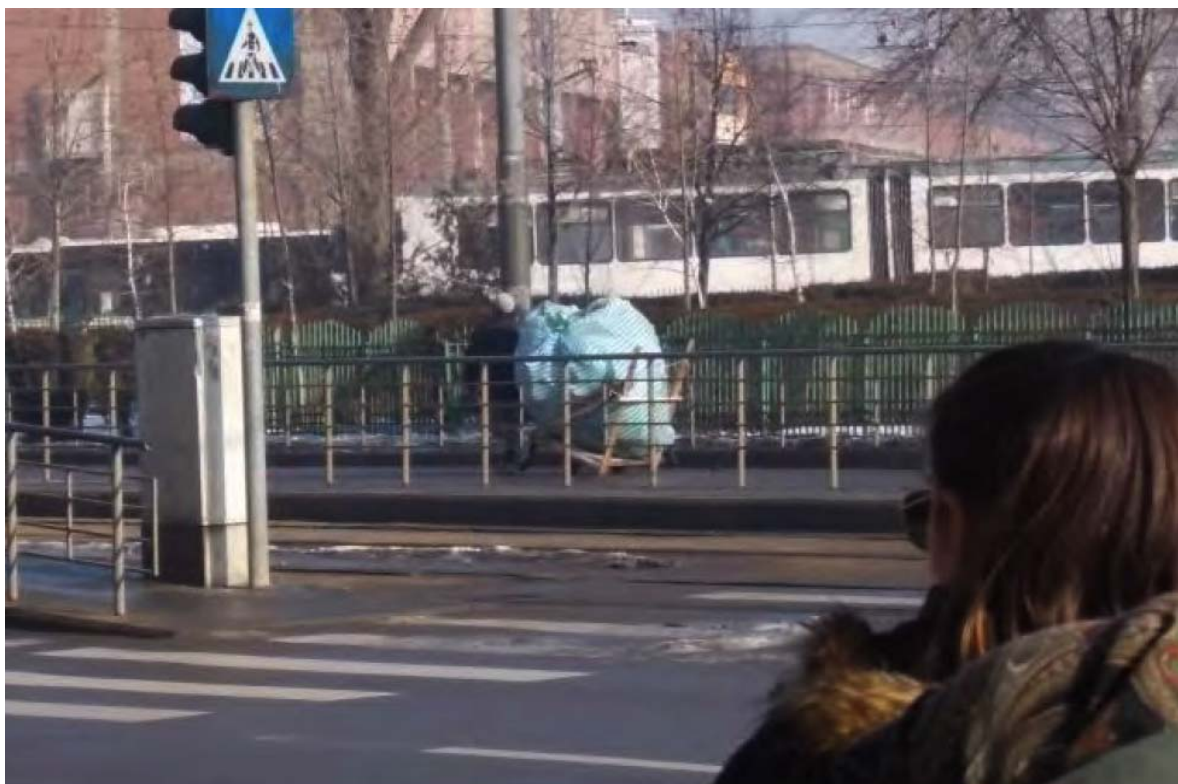
“This picture represents the life of a man that doesn't get any help from anyone. He ended up sleeping in the streets, the system won't get involved in helping him.” (Andreea)



Poverty, lack of job, hopeless, dependency by minimal state aid (documented in Romanian literature) are well spotted in two different pictures made by David and Emi, which is sending a message to policymakers to address the issue of excluded people, to develop programs for inclusion. Explaining the meaning of his picture David is tackling also the problem of enrichment by corruption:



„This is some of my neighbors who took some boards. I want to show how some people live nowadays, to me it's important how other people besides me live. This is their job, trying to look for iron so they can buy food for their children. To the people who have the power to change something in Romania I would like to say that they should forget about themselves, their wealth, and think about other people – they should think of those who ended up on the streets, the way I ended up there as well.” (David)



Emy

Nu am apucat să îl prind așa bine în poză, dar e un tânăr până în 20 de ani care strânge sticle. Eu l-am prins pe el când era cu un câruț și toată lumea îl daونا, dar el nu se dădea la o parte și îl vede de treaba lui. Și pe mine m-a marcat faptul că, deși el e un boschetar, un amărât, el îl vede de treaba lui, strânge sticle ca să poată trăi. Dar dacă stăm bine să ne gândim, dacă el avea o școală sau dacă părinții lui erau mai capabili, poate nu mai era acolo. Putem să fim în situația lui fiecare dintre noi, pot să ajung și eu așa și oricare altul. Dar noi, tinerii care avem posibilități, care avem părinți lângă noi, care încă suntem frumoși și deștepti și încă suntem la școală, trebuie să ne înținem de școală.

I couldn't capture him that well, but he's a young guy in about his 20's that collects bottles. I captured him along with his cart and everybody honked at him, but he didn't move and was minding his own business. The thing that marked me was that he, although he's a homeless, a poor man, he minds his own business, and collects bottles so he can support himself. But if we think about it, if he had an education or if his parents were more efficient, maybe he wouldn't be in this situation. Any of us could be in his situation, I could also end up like him, just like anyone else. But we, the teenagers who have possibilities, who have our parents by our side, who are still beautiful and smart and in school, we must keep going to school.



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Even the young people involved in photovoice exercise were shutting the pictures individually, due to common experience of the same social problems they focused on the same topics, related to poverty, exclusion and powerless, lack of capacity to get support and negotiate with social agencies for (a better) access to services and entitled rights. Their focus covered a wide range of people, from children to young people, adults and elderly, homeless and beggars, drug addicts and other hopeless people. Sometimes they mirrored the wealthy people, but not necessarily as a positive example, as a 'final destination wish' of every person but as huge cleavage between (the many) poors and wealthy people which do not care about their less fortunate human fellows.

In this sense, and continuing the ideas from pictures taken by David, Emi, Andreea and Amir, two other youngsters – Monalisa and Timotei – shutted similar pictures:



Monalisa

Au fost case care s-au dărâmat și acum este o curte plină de gunoi. Sunt oameni care nu mai au voie să stea acolo. Mușii tineri nevinovați care nu au unde să locuiască, care au fost dați afară pentru că așa au hotărât "șii mari" și ei nu au avut ce să facă. Părerea mea este că nu ar trebui să li se ia și acel bun, chiar dacă este puțin. Pentru că mușii tineri băieți s-au apucat de furat, cerșit și au plecat prin țări străine și s-au umilit ca să-și poată câștiga existența.

This are houses that were demolished and now it's a yard full of garbage. People are not allowed to stay there anymore. There are many innocent teenagers who don't have a place to live, who were evacuated because of a decision of "the big people" and they didn't have any choice. My opinion is that they shouldn't take this good thing away from them, even if it is little. Now many young men have started to steal, to beg and also went abroad to foreign countries where they humiliated themselves to be able to earn a living.



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Timotei

Este un reșeu improvizat. Multe familii care nu au posibilități de a-și încălzi casa se folosesc de această metodă. Merge non-stop și dacă se arde un fir poate să îți ardă toată casa. Este un foarte mare risc să ai un reșeu în casă, și pentru copii și pentru adulți. Dar este cea mai ieftină metodă.

It is an improvised electric cooker. Many families who can't afford to heat their home are using this method. It's on non-stop and if a thread burns it can burn down your whole house. It's very risky to have an electric cooker in your house, both for children and for adults. But it is the cheapest method.



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FAMILY – the central value ... But also the 'friendship' ...

Following the discourse about lack of willingness of society and in charge social institutions to help in need people and families, the main idea of youngsters focused on **family values and family support** as the main agent in helping its members in crisis situation.

The focus on family as a centered value reflects not only a more general trend among youngsters in Romania²⁶⁶, but particularly in our group of young people. It is not only a kind of subsidiarity (family / relatives / friends/ community/ state agencies) when young people think about/ are confronted with problems, but a desperate awareness of the fact that most of the times behind of (failure) family support is merely nothing or only a scriptic

266 Within the program “Authentic Leadership” developed in 2010-2011 with youngsters 14-18 years old, they were asked to select the values that are mostly defining them. From a list of 45 values, they choose only 28. Two thirds of them choose as their first three definite values the 'family', 'friendship' and 'respect'. *“If we compare the most frequently called 3 values and the rest, we notice that in fact these three represent the core of attitudes of young, as well as the desirable portrait which they attribute to others.”* [“Familia” și “prietenia” principalele valori din viața adolescentului roman - <http://www.leaders.ro/familia-si-prietenia-principalele-valori-din-viata-adolescentului-roman/>]

entitlement to rights embedded in a huge bureaucracy.



Amir

Este mama mea. Aș vrea să transmit un mesaj tuturor adolescenților. Să își prețuiască, respecte, iubească și aprecieze mama, indiferent de situație. Pentru că mama este doar una și trebuie prețuită când trebuie, nu când nu mai este. Mulți adolescenți nu își apreciază mamele și nu știu prin ce au trecut ele ca să îi crească. Ei știu numai să ceară, iar dacă la un moment dat nu mai au de unde să le dea, ei încep să reproșeze. Trebuie să se gândească că părinții fac eforturi mari ca să le ofere tot ce își doresc. Mulți adolescenți își vând propriii părinți pentru stupefianți, și mai multe. Într-un final vreau să spun că orice adolescent trebuie să își țină mama aproape și să o aprecieze toată viața.

This is my mother. I would like to send out a message to all teenagers. To cherish, respect, love and appreciate their mother, no matter what. Because you only have one mother and she has to be valued now, not when she won't be around. Many teenagers don't appreciate their mothers and don't know what their mothers went through raising them. They only know how to ask for things, and if sometimes the parents don't have what to give anymore, they start blaming them. They have to think about the fact that their parents make great efforts in order to offer them everything they want. Many teenagers are selling their own parents for drugs, and so on. Finally I want to say that any teenager should keep their mom near and appreciate her all their life.



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(Amir)

For many families (especial poor families, traditional families) the children's care is based on older brothers / sisters who are empowered to take care of their younger members of family, while adults are trying to make some money/ get some resources for entire family. That means in many cases that the risk to have poor performance at school or even of dropping off is higher for the young carers. The sense of sacrifice make the family to be more united but does not help too much in improving the overall quality of life of the family. In the next two pictures David and Emy are explaining this fundamental value, and the very powerful (but useless?) significance of this kind of sacrifice: „Family for me is power, they are [always] by your side.” (David); „For me family means strength, hope and courage.

Family is everything [...]” (Emy).



David

Am făcut poza la întâmplare, m-a întrebat sora mea dacă am aparatul la mine și am spus că da și atunci a vrut să îl fac o poză. Sora mea este foarte importantă pentru mine și mereu gândesc la câte lucruri a făcut ea pentru noi. Când eram mici, în loc să aibă și ea o viață normală, să ia să cu prietenii ei, să poată să meargă la un liceu, părinții noștri au optat-o din a face aceste lucruri ca să ne crească pe mine și frații mei mai mici. Ca noi să putem să avem o educație mai bună și ea să își piardă drepturile ei. Și o admir, mă mândresc cu ea, cu toate că nu prea sunt eu așa foarte respectuos cu ea. Familia pentru mine înseamnă putere, ei sunt lângă tine. O vorbă bună, o vorbă rea, te mai lasă un pic la mișto, te mai face să râzi, te încurajează, te aruncă la pământ. E familia. Pentru mine familia înseamnă persoanele de lângă tine, nu te gândești numai la tine și ești un egoist. Cred că toți avem instinctul asta de a proteja, de a face oare ce bine.

I randomly took the picture, my sister asked me if I had my camera with me and I said yes and then she wanted me to take a picture of her. My sister is very important to me and I thought about how much she did for us. When I was little, instead of having a normal life, instead of going out with her friends, to be able to go to high school, our parents stopped her from doing these things to raise me and my younger brothers. So we could get a better education and she lost her rights. And I admire her, I am proud of her, although I'm not really that respectful with her. Family for me is power, they are by your side. A kind word, a bad word, they sometimes make fun of you, they make you laugh, they encourage you, they bring you down. It's family. For me family means the people next to you, you don't only think about yourself and you're not an egoist. I think that we all have this instinct to protect, to do what is right.



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Emy

Aici este una dintre surorile mele, Ana Maria și Emi junior, nepotul meu, care este băiatul surorii mele mai mari, Nicoleta. Mi-a fost foarte dor de ea pentru că nu prea mai stăm așa de mult împreună cum stăteam când eram mici și atunci când a venit la mine i-am făcut o poză. Mai am încă doi nepoți, o fată și un băiat, dar el este preferatul meu. Asta poate pentru că îl cheamă Emi, ca pe mine. Pentru mine familia înseamnă putere, speranță și curaj. Familia înseamnă totul, câteodată nu ai cuvinte să exprimi cât de mult te bușești sau îți ia o persoană. Ei fac parte din familia mea și sunt foarte importanți. Nu doar ei, toată familia.

This is one of my sisters, Ana Maria and Emi junior, my nephew, who is the son of my older sister, Nicoleta. I really missed her because we don't spend so much time together as when we were little and when she came by my place I took a picture. I have two more nephews, a girl and a boy, but he is my favorite. Maybe because of the fact that he's named Emi, just like me. For me family means strength, hope and courage. Family is everything, sometimes you don't have the words to express how much you love or care about a person. They are part of my family and very important. Not just them, the whole family.



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It is important to frame this attitude of young people within the global context of Romanian values. According with B. Voicu (2008), „86% of Romanian family considers to be "very important". [...] similar scores received work and religion which does not differ significantly (56% and 51%), leisure and friends are almost equal (35% and 29%), while the politics is considered to be very important only by 6% of Romanian respondents in the 2008 European Values Survey wave. The order preferences do not change by sex, age or education.”

... friendship values

... and models of friendship represents a solid anchor for youngsters; sometimes these relationships are guiding them for the entire life:



Alexandra

În această poză sunt colegii mei de clasă, eu și doamna dirigintă. Am făcut poza asta deoarece rămâne o amintire frumoasă pentru colegul nostru, Cătălin, care s-a mutat din liceul nostru. Am vrut și noi și el să avem amintiri unii cu alții, el este și va rămâne ca un frate. Fără el, în clasă este pustiu și prea multă liniște.

In this picture are my classmates, me and my homeroom teacher. I took this picture because it will remain a beautiful memory for our classmate, Catalin, who moved from our school. Both we and him wanted to have memories with one another, he is and will remain as a brother to me. Without him, the classroom is too quiet and deserted.



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Amir

Sunteu alături de copilul, fratele, prietenul meu cel mai bun care m-a iubit și mă iubește chiar dacă nu mai este lângă mine. Poza aceasta pentru mine reprezintă durere, deoarece din cauza lăcomiei am ajuns să-l pierd, nu am mai putut să îl țin lângă mine. Am plâns deoarece mă doare că îl-am pierdut. Nu i-aș înlocui niciodată. Măncam din același sandwich, dormeam împreună, mergeam peste tot împreună. Dar acum, din cauza lipsei de spațiu și a celor de sus, am ajuns să-mi pierd prietenul. Atunci când m-au evacuat pe mine și familia mea, am fost nevoit să-l dau.

It's me with my child, my brother, my best friend who loved me and still loves me even if he's not by my side anymore. This picture represents pain for me. I lost him because of greed, I could not keep him by my side. I cried because it hurts that I lost him. I would never replace him. We ate from the same sandwich, we slept together, we went everywhere together. But now, due to lack of space and those above, I ended up losing my friend. When they evacuated me and my family I had to give him away.



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Participation

We consider that the next pictures will explain by themselves the attitude of youngsters to participation, as well as their real chances for participation.



David

Aici sunt eu încercând să dau un exemplu bun la niște copii de la un liceu unde am făcut niște ore de voluntariat. Dacă stați acasă și tot nu aveți ce să faceți, puteți să faceți voluntariat ca să ajutați pe cineva.

This is me, trying to give a good example to some children at a school where I did some volunteer hours. If you stay at home and don't have anything to do, you can volunteer and help someone.



„This is me, trying to give a good example to some children at a school where I did some volunteer hours. If you stay at home and don't have anything to do, you can volunteer and help someone.” (David)



Timotei

Această poză este cu sora mea. Făcea gogoși pentru copiii de la biserică. O iubesc, m-a crescut. Așa cum hrănește alți copii, așa m-a hrănit și pe mine. Familia este darul cel mai prețios, nu toți au o familie iubitoare.

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„This picture is of my sister. She was making donuts for the children from the church. I love her, she raised me. The way she feeds other children, she fed me. The family is the most precious gift,

not everyone has a loving family.” (Timotei)



Timotei

Aici este profesorul meu, un coleg și o colegă. Cu ei petrec mult timp la școală și în afara școlii. Profesorul mă învață lucruri bune, cum ar fi să nu mă droghez și alte chestii. De aia am ales să fac poza asta cu el. Dacă nu ai 12 clase nu te primește nimeni la niciun loc de muncă. Tinerii ar trebui să nu lipsească de la școală, ca să își facă clasele.

This is my teacher and two of my classmates. I spend a lot of time with them, both at school and outside school. My teacher teaches me good things, such as not to use drugs and stuff. That's why I chose to take this picture of him. If you don't finish 12 grades, nobody gives you a job. Young people should not skip school, they should finish their 12 grades.



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Tony

In această poză sunt eu, pe strada unde am locuit și unde încă locuiesc. Am făcut această poză pentru că vreau să strig atenția oamenilor care ne-au făcut rău și ne-au evacuat, în special primarilor. Pentru că în situația în care suntem noi sunt și alți tineri care dorm, mănâncă și se spală pe stradă. Oamenii care au grijă de România ar trebui să aibă grijă și de noi, tineri, pentru că noi suntem viitorul României. VREM O SCHIMBARE!

It's me in this picture, on the street where I lived and where I still live. I took this picture because I want to draw people's attention, the ones that have hurt us and evacuated us, especially the mayors. Because in the situation that we are, there are other young people who sleep, eat and wash in the street. People who take care of Romania should take care of us, young people, because we are the future of Romania. WE WANT A CHANGE!



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Social innovation

„This picture represent our street protest because we were evacuated. There, in those barracks, are three families with children, three families who withstood the cold, the rain, the snow. We wanted to send a message with this protest, that no matter who you are or what you've done, we are all people. We have rights and we are equal, whatever you do or whoever you are. For me, the protest means hope because all the people in the street are my neighbors, but it's also an important thing because all of us who live there are like a team, like a family.” (Emy)



Emy

Poza asta reprezintă protestul pe care îl facem noi în stradă pentru că am fost evacuați. Acolo, în barăcile aleea, sunt trei familii cu copii, trei familii care au rezistat în frig, ploaie, ninsoare. Prin protestul ăsta am vrut să transmitem un mesaj, și anume că nu contează cine ești sau ce ai făcut, toți suntem oameni. Avem drepturi și suntem egali, orice faci sau oricine ești. Pentru mine, protestul reprezintă o speranță pentru că oamenii de pe stradă sunt vecinii mei, dar e și un lucru important pentru că noi toți care stăm acolo suntem ca o echipă, ca o familie.

This picture represent our street protest because we were evacuated. There, in those barracks, are three families with children, three families who withstood the cold, the rain, the snow. We wanted to send a message with this protest, that no matter who you are or what you've done, we are all people. We have rights and we are equal, whatever you do or whoever you are. For me, the protest means hope because all the people in the street are my neighbors, but it's also an important thing because all of us who live there are like a team, like a family.



„Funeral services are always a secure workplace. They can't stop existing, people die all the time and then people turn to the funeral services. It is a job for the future. You earn money and it's not



Timotei

Serviciile funerare sunt întotdeauna sigure ca loc de muncă. Nu are cum să se termine, tot timpul moare cineva și atunci lumea apelează la serviciile funerare. Este un serviciu de viitor. Se câștigă și nu e nici o muncă grea.

Funeral services are always a secure workplace. They can't stop existing, people die all the time and then people turn to the funeral services. It is a job for the future. You earn money and it's not a hard work.



a hard work.” (Timotei)

Aspirations

“This is a picture of a classmate of mine who likes to look nice and attract attention, but through things that don’t characterise her. For example, the contacts, I don’t understand why she uses them because they can affect her eyes. Well, they already started to affect them, they water, they began to be smaller, and the pupil started to shrink. In high school, I think that of all the girls, many of them use lenses and I don’t understand why. She almost always resorts to beauty tricks and I don’t understand why, she’s beautiful and natural.” (Alexandra)



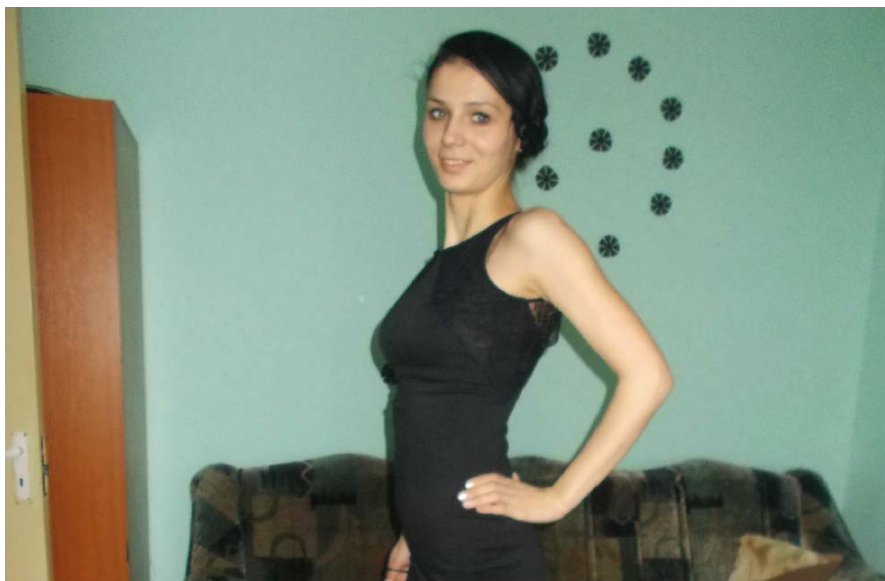
Alexandra

În poză e o colegă de a mea căreia îi place să arate bine, să atragă atenția, dar prin lucruri care nu o caracterizează. De exemplu, lentilele, eu nu înțeleg de ce și-a pus lentile care pot să-i afecteze ochii. Bine, deja a început să-i afecteze, îi lacrimăază, a început să aibă ochii mai mici, a început să i se micșoreze pupila. La liceu, cred că din câte fete sunt, foarte multe sunt cu lentile și nu înțeleg de ce. Ea mai tot timpul apelează la trucuri de înfrumusețare și nu înțeleg de ce, e frumoasă și naturală.

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„This is at my place, I was getting ready to go out with my friends to see some Romani musicians. It is a passion of mine, to go out and have fun, and last but not least I love being chic and elegant all the time.” (Alexandra)



Alexandra

Este acasă la mine, mă pregăteam să merg cu prietenii la băutari. Este o pasiune de a mea de a mă duce la distracții; nu în ultimul rând îmi place să fiu cochetă și elegantă tot timpul.

This is at my place, I was getting ready to go out with my friends to see some Romanian musicians. It is a passion of mine, to go out and have fun, and last but not least I love being chic and elegant all the time.



Alexandra

Este un salon de manichiură, îmi place foarte mult această meserie și aș dori să învăț mai multe despre acest job. Să pot câștiga bani prin ceea ce-mi face plăcere, ceea ce mă face să fiu mai răbdătoare.

It's a nail salon, I really like this job and I would like to learn more about this job. I can earn money through what pleases me, which makes me more patient.



„It's a nail salon, I really like this job and I would like to learn more about this job. I can earn money through what pleases me, which makes me more patient.” (Alexandra)



Alexandra

În această poză sunt eu și colega mea, la liceu, în pauză. Ne plictisim, iar, în general, când ne plictisim facem tot felul de boacâne, cum ar fi să ne încuim în dulapuri. Anii de liceu sunt cei mai frumoși ani din viața unui adolescent. Prețuiți-i și distrați-vă, că după terminarea liceului o să rămănem doar cu amintiri. Atât.

In this picture you see me and my classmates from high school, during schoolbreak. We were bored and generally when we get bored we do all kinds of blunders, like lock ourselves inside the cabinets. High school years are the best years of a teenager's life. You should cherish them and have fun, because when high school ends only memories remain. And that's all.



„In this picture you see me and my classmates from high school, during schoolbreak. We were bored and generally when we get bored we do all kinds of blunders, like lock ourselves inside the cabinets. High school years are the best years of a teenager's life. You should cherish them and have fun, because when high school ends only memories remain. And that's all.” (Alexandra)



Amir

Această mașină mi-a atras atenția și mi-au scobit ochii când am văzut-o și am zis că vreau să o am, dar e greu să o am. Nu o pot avea decât dacă spelez la alte lucruri, cum ar fi trafic de droguri, prostituție, furturi. O mașină este importantă, e imaginea mea. Majoritatea oamenilor au nevoie de automobile pentru a merge în vacanță, la serviciu. Veniturile oamenilor sunt foarte mici pentru a-și permite un automobil, în ziua de astăzi.

This car caught my attention and my eyes flashed when I saw it and I said I wanted to have it, but it's hard for me to get it. I can not have it unless I turn to other things, such as drug trafficking, prostitution, theft. A car is important, it's my image. Most people need cars to go on vacations, or to work. But nowadays people have very low incomes to afford a car.



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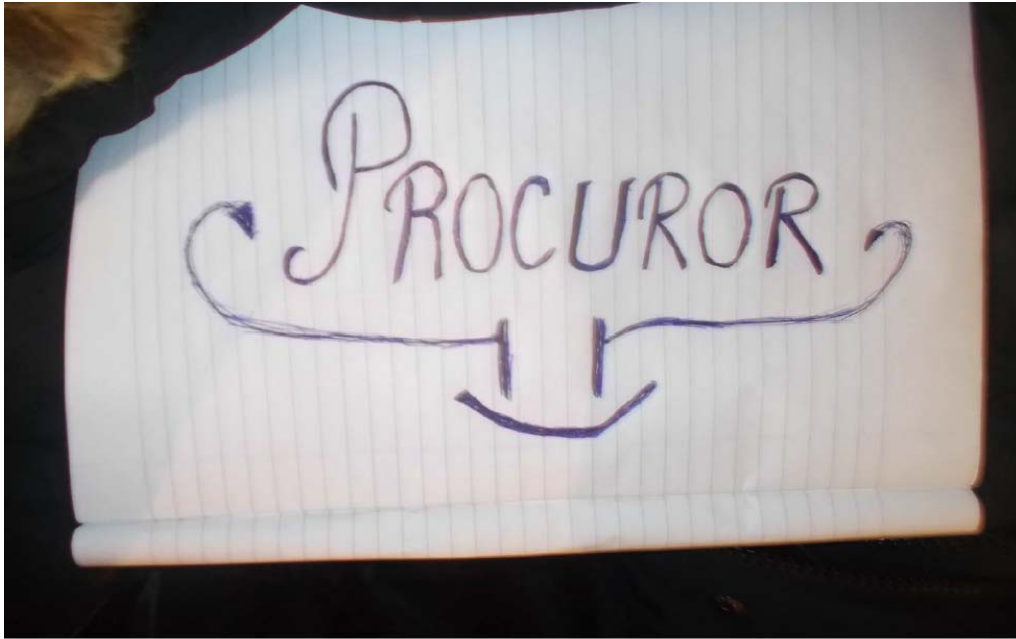
Amir

Ami facu poza pentru că mi-am amintit de ceva, un status de pe facebook, prietenia ca zăpadă se topește și mi-e dăd mulle de gândit. Cu poza asta vreau să spun că de multe ori prietenia vine să arate ca bulgărele albe, curate, cristal, frumoase. Dar nu e așa. Că și bulgărele, la fel prietenia se topește. Și asta înțeleg. Au venit să transmit tuturor din cauza lipsei, a neajunsurilor, a oamenilor care se gândesc numai la ei, se duc pe prietenii prietenii încep să se poartă între ei și prietenii și se începe să se rădăie între ei. Și nu mai există chema asta cu prietenia. În casa de astăzi nu mai acumulați al încrederea în prietenii. Și nu se mai numără înimeni prietenii. Dacă pe baza statutului financiar pentru că de multe ori un prietenii tău îți dă doar când ai bani. Când nu ai bani, uită de tine.

I took the picture because I remembered something, a Facebook status, the friendship such as the snow melts, and this gave me a lot to think about. With this picture I would like to say that the friendship, a lot of the time, wants to look like this snowball, pure, clean, crystal, beautiful. But it's not like this. As this snowball, the friendship melts. It vanishes right away. I'd like to transmit this to everyone: because of shortages, shortcomings, people who only think of themselves, the friendship ends; they start to stab one another and steal from each other, to lie to one another. And this friendship thing doesn't exist anymore. Nowadays you can't trust anyone. And no one calls each other friends anymore. Only on the basis of financial status because your friends often only stay by your side when you have money. When you don't have money they forget about you.



„I took the picture because I remembered something, a Facebook status, the friendship such as the snow melts, and this gave me a lot to think about. With this picture I would like to say that the friendship, a lot of the time, wants to look like this snowball, pure, clean, crystal, beautiful. But it's not like this. As this snowball, the friendship melts. It vanishes right away. I'd like to transmit this to everyone: because of shortages, shortcomings, people who only think of themselves, the friendship ends; they start to stab one another and steal from each other, to lie to one another. And this friendship thing doesn't exist anymore. Nowadays you can't trust anyone. And no one calls each other friends anymore. Only on the basis of financial status because your friends often only stay by your side when you have money. When you don't have money they forget about you.” (Amir)



Andreea

Prin poza asta am vrut să exprim că acest lucru este foarte important pentru mine, mă pregătesc pentru asta... este foarte important pentru mine să ajung ceea ce mi-am propus. Pe net sunt teste care se dau la admitere la facultatea de drept, sunt teste la română, logică, psihologie și depinde de profil îți alegi. Eu îl fac mai mult pe cel de psihologie și română (gramatică). Și sunt prezentate pe net și cursurile pe care le faci la facultate.

With this picture I wanted to express that this thing is very important to me, I'm preparing for this... It is very important for me to obtain what I planned. There are tests on the internet that you take for the admission into law school, there are tests for Romanian, logic, psychology and it depends on which profile you choose. I mostly take the psychology and Romanian (grammar) ones. And the courses that you take in college are available on the internet.



„With this picture I wanted to express that this thing [procuror = prosecutor] is very important to me, I'm preparing for this ... it is very important for me to obtain what I planned. There are tests on the internet that you take for the admission into law school, there are tests for Romanian, logic, psychology and it depends on which profile you choose. I mostly take the psychology and Romanian (grammar) ones. And the courses that you take in college are available on the internet.” (Andreea)



David

Frații mei. Așa cum suntem noi, nebuni, ne batem, ne certăm, dar tot frați suntem. Mă mândresc cu toți frații mei chiar dacă ne înjurăm, ne batem și nu știu ce. Asta este o imagine veselă și îmi place să îmi văd frați veseli, plini de energie, plini de putere ca să pot să fiu și eu plin de putere și să știu că ei sunt mereu în spatele meu și eu în spatele lor.

My brothers. The way we are, crazy, we fight, we argue, but we are still brothers. I'm proud of all my brothers even if we cuss at each other, fight and whatever. This is a cheerful image and I like to see my brothers cheerful, energetic, powerful so I also can be powerful and know that they are always backing me up and I'm backing them up.



„My brothers. The way we are, crazy, we fight, we argue, but we are still brothers. I'm proud of all my brothers even if we cuss at each other, fight and whatever. This is a cheerful image and I like to see my brothers cheerful, energetic, powerful so I also can be powerful and know that they are always backing me up and I'm backing them up.” (David)



Monalisa

Am făcut această poză pentru a arăta că acesta este visul meu, îmi doresc foarte tare să devin o manichiuristă perfectă. Îmi place această meserie și mă liniștește atunci când sunt supărată. Din punctul meu de vedere, manichiura la o fată este foarte importantă. După asta îți dai seama ce grijă are de ea.

I took this picture to show that this is my dream, I really want to become a perfect manicurist. I like this job and it calms me when I'm angry. From my point of view manicure is very important to a girl. Based on this you realize how she takes care of herself.



„I took this picture to show that this is my dream, I really want to become a perfect manicurist. I like this job and it calms me when I'm angry. From my point of view manicure is very important to a girl. Based on this you realize how she takes care of herself.” (Monalisa)



Timotei

Aici sunt eu, în biserică. Îmi petrec aproape tot timpul aici. Mă duc acolo și cânt și atunci mă simt bine. Când sunt nervos, îmi găsesc sprijinul în cântecele astea și aș vrea o carieră cu asta. E o pasiune. De mic copil mi-a plăcut cum a cântat sora mea și a început să îmi placă și mie. Am avut prieteni care m-au ajutat să fac canto timp de trei luni și acum am un prieten care cântă la instrumente și mă învață și pe mine să cânt pe note.

This is me, in the church. I spend almost all my time here. I go there and sing and then I feel good. When I'm angry, I find support in these songs and I want a career within this. It's a passion of mine. As a child I liked how my sister sang and I started to like it as well. I had friends who learned me how to sing for three months and now I have a friend who plays instruments and teaches me how to play.



„This is me, in the church. I spend almost all my time here. I go there and sing and then I feel good. When I'm angry, I find support in these songs and I want a career within this. It's a passion of mine. As a child I liked how my sister sang and I started to like it as well. I had friends who learned me how to sing for three months and now I have a friend who plays instruments and teaches me how to play.” (Timotei)



Tony

În viitorul apropiat aş vrea să practic această meserie pentru ca îmi place foarte mult să tund şi este o meserie bănoasă.

In the near future I would like to practice this profession because I really like to cut hair and it's a paying profession.



„In the near future I would like to practice this profession because I really like to cut hair and it's a paying profession.” (Tony)

6. Research Methods: A methodological reflection

The research team approached the people in the area, having extensive discussions with adult people and youngsters, as well as mediating the conflict and facilitating negotiations with local authorities. The lack of cooperation between the two conflicting parties made many victims among evictees who refused the accommodation solution proposed by the Local Authorities and continued to live in the street, also during the harsh winter. In this context we decided to try to hear the voice of the young people, not only about the current situation, but mainly about their perception and perspectives in making their voice hearable by decision makers mostly regarding their chances to access quality education and job market.

The Photovoice approach was a good option because it is participatory in its essence. Being disadvantaged / socially excluded does not necessarily suppose lack of access to various resources but sometimes the access to such resources is driving the beneficiary to a deep dependency, lack of self-support and self-exclusion. Photovoice is a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach that makes the people to express their voices and concerns related with the life, setting and aspirations, from the perspective of the inhabitants (Wang, 2003). In our particular research, Photovoice have been use to create a proper environment in order to assess and reflect the youths life, promote critical dialog and raise awareness about community concerns, inform and promote innovative changes. Photovoice facilitates the improvements at personal and community levels, empowers individuals and communities, in order to enable them to point solutions and participate in all the stages of community change initiative. (Wang & Pies, 2008).

The participants of PhotoVoice consisted in a total number of 10 Roma ethnics youngsters, aged 16 – 20 years old, most of them part of the group evicted from Vulturilor Street and nearby, district 3rd of Bucharest. The recruitment plan was conducted in collaboration with Carusel Association, an organization active in the area by providing social services. In order to select the participants, the interviews took place nearby the places of residence, in the neighbourhood, so the participants could have the full control to express their interest and concerns related with this process. In order to select the participants, several criteria (Powers, Freedman, & Pitner, 2012) have been established: (1) Residents of the camp recently evicted from 50 Vulturilor Street of nearby area. (2) Age appropriate for the focus group, 15 – 29 years of age. (3) Ready to share ideas about how to improve the situation of young people. (4) Drew in learning how to use a camera and/or want to improve their photography skills, (5) Enjoy working in groups, (6) Willingness to share their time to participate in the project.

Several policy areas have been taken into account - education, employment, work and social assistance supporting self-determination, participation/ involvement etc.

Thematic analyses have been conducted in collaboration with the participants in several steps over the course of the project. Through both inductive and deductive thematic analysis we identified the emergent themes aligned nicely with and supported existing theories in the literature. After each photo shooting process was done, the research team conducted sessions of discussions with all participants; each photo was analysed and accompanied by stories / messages. The aim of the session was to realize a 'macro-picture that underlines there are also others in their situation and appropriate to intervene at this level. All the pictures have been printed on special boards displayed during the confrontation phase. The confrontation was organized in the premises of the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, with the participation of the young people involved in the Photovoice process and other key stakeholders.

7. Conclusions

We'll start our concluding remarks with a very shocking fact which is ... out of conclusions: The "confrontation" of youngsters with various stakeholders took place in 2nd of April, 16:00, the Council Room of Faculty of Sociology and Social Work. Where invited a lot of representatives (around 70) from Local Authorities, NGO's, journalists etc. About 30 of them confirmed their participation. At 16:30 we started the debates with 4 guests: 1 from General Direction of Social Assistance and Child Protection, Bucharest, and 3 from NGO sector. All of them are old friends and collaborators of us.

Based on our photovoice exercise (but we can extensively extrapolate our conclusions to overall young population and not only), the social policies and practices do not take the perspectives of (disadvantaged) young people seriously. Even there are governmental strategies and programs addressing the issue of wide social integration of young people, in practice the things are slightly different.

Youngsters experiential knowledge, even limited due to lack of information, participation and opportunities, reflects some fundamental aspirations and conceptions of justice which are very few articulated, heard and contested in social policies and practices as well as in other aspects of their daily lives.

They are considering themselves as disadvantaged/marginalized and that have to succeed mostly by their own or with family support but not the state/ institutional support. The disadvantaged youngsters are not at all informed or aware about local social programs targeting them (excepting "Second chance" school program and some AJOFM job related programs); in fact such programs are missing.

They are considering such programs as ineffective/not appropriate to the real needs of them.

They are aware that the only chance to succeed in life is through school attendance but the school is not attractive at all – has old fashioned courses and teachers that do not motivate them to perform.

Their aspirations are modeled (lowered sometimes) by the family and are from deep pessimism to unachievable ones through legal ways.

For youngsters, the family is the **cornerstone**. All their values, dreams, aspirations, needs are gravitating around family and mostly in the absence of any agency/institutional support.

Eventually the public institutions/services are seldom seen as temporary and accidental vehicles which drive them closer to the final goal: independence in absence of the State.

In terms of employment the main requests refer to job creation and non-discrimination.

In terms of participation, the young people are perceiving it mostly through the lens of family and school. Volunteering could be a very good example for others to share their resources, like David which was doing volunteering in a school for pupils, and talking them about "No hate speech", or Timotei's sister who does volunteering (making donuts) for the children from the church. The school is seen as the most important 'vehicle' driving ones life

to success and prosperity, to be respected and integrated in society. But school is sometimes a very abstract agency and it make sense for young people through the teachers but not necessarily the knowledge that they can achieve. As Timotei mentioned, the teacher is very important in the life of young scholars, because he/ she is not only teaching mathematics / geography etc. but has a pedagogical approach helping youngsters to understand what are the real values and behave according to these: „*This is my teacher [who] teaches me good things, such as not to use drugs and other stuff [like this]. That's why I chose to take this picture of him. If you don't graduate the high school, nobody gives you a job.*” There are some studies in Romanian literature (Dan, 2011, Voicu, 2009) which underlined that the educational performance of youngsters in school is strongly linked by their positive appreciation of teacher (if they feel the teachers friendly, if they liked them, then they like also the discipline these are teaching and also the risk of drop out is decreasing).

In terms of social innovation it was difficult to catch relevant points of view. The only innovation they tackled referred to finding a solution for accommodation/ having a home (they were evicted in September 2014). Emy underlined a very original form of protest (writings on barracks like “*houses for everybody, no matter the ethnicity*”) against indifference of Local Authorities but society as well, explaining that “*no matter who you are or what you've done, we are all humans. We have rights and we are equal, whatever you do or whoever you are. For me, the protest means hope because all the people in the street are my neighbors, but it's also an important thing because all of us who live there are like a family.*”

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