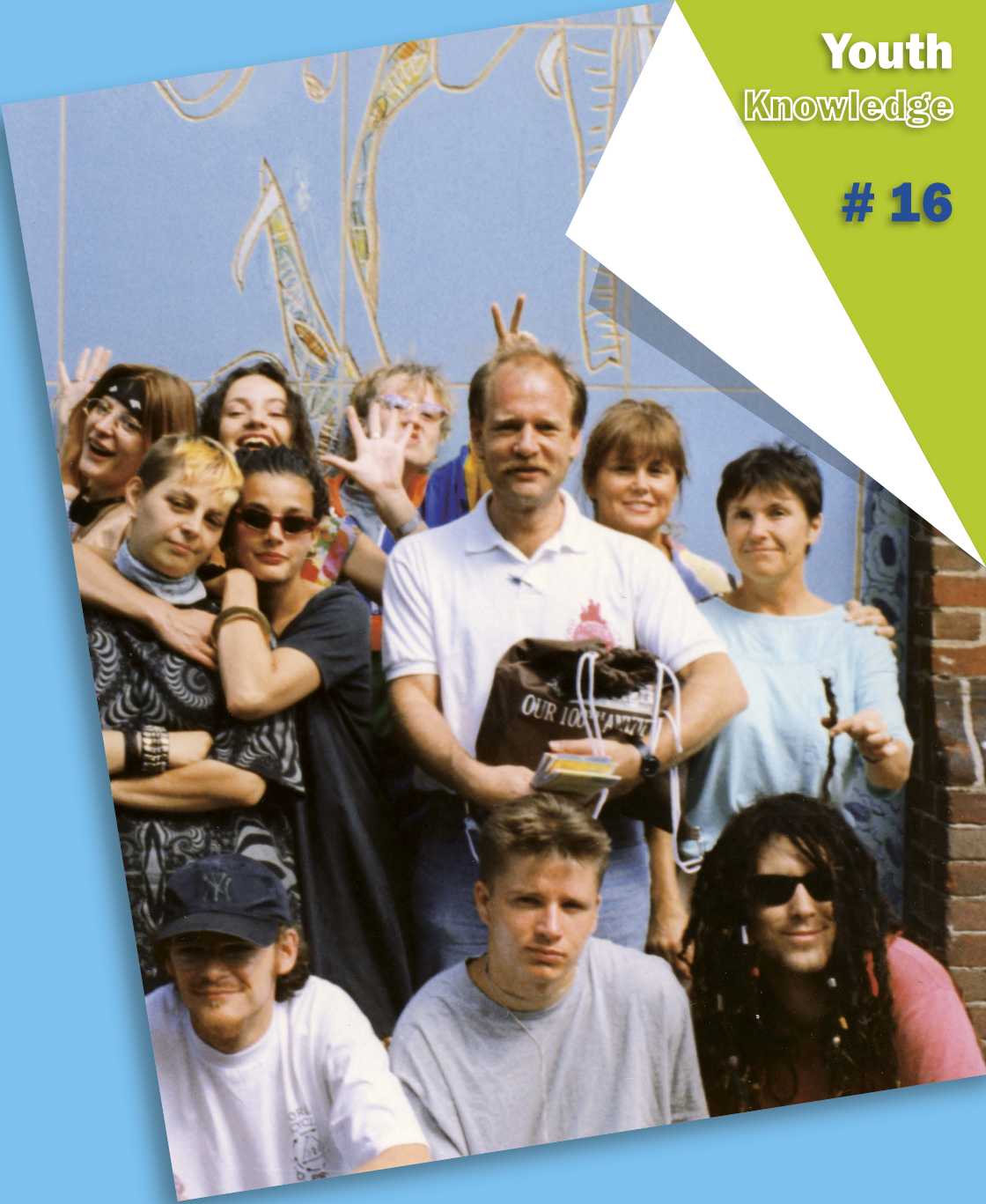


**Youth  
Knowledge**

**# 16**



## **Youth Partnership**

Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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# **The history of youth work in Europe**

**Volume 3**

Relevance for today's  
youth work policy

**The history  
of youth work in Europe  
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youth work policy**

**Volume 3**

*Edited by Filip Coussée, Howard Williamson  
and Griet Verschelden*

Council of Europe Publishing

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# Reflecting on the historical sensation of youth work and youth policy in Europe

*Jan Vanhee and Hanjo Schild*

This publication comprises the contributions of guest speakers at the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy. Some 250 conference participants (youth workers, youth researchers, youth policy makers and officials) took part in this conference, held from 5 to 7 July 2010 in Vooruit in Ghent under the Belgian EU presidency.

Two earlier workshops on “History of Youth Work and Youth Policy” in 2008 and 2009 in Blankenberge (Belgium), co-organised by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth and the Internationaal Jeugdbeleid, Agentschap Sociaal-Cultureel Werk voor Jeugd en Volwassenen of the Flemish Community of Belgium, focused on the history of youth work in different countries and their comparison, revealing the social, pedagogical and political nature of youth work. The subsequent conference organised by the Belgian EU presidency added certain new perspectives to the content of the expert workshops, focusing on regional differences, and on methodological and thematic questions.

The conference’s final declaration contains the following:

*There are many histories of youth work in Europe as well as a more recent history of European-level youth work. It is characterised by diversity, tension and development. It has been informed and led in many different ways – through social movements, youth organisations and associations, by faith groups, the non-governmental sector and national, regional and local youth policy. It has engaged with different groups of young people, often distinguished by social class, religious belief, political affiliation, or cultural interests. It has been organised in different ways, at times led by adults, at others co-managed or self-managed by young people themselves.*

*Youth work is both complex and often misunderstood on account of that complexity. Put simply, however, it does two things. It provides space for association, activity, dialogue and action. And it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood. In today’s Europe, it is guided and governed by principles of participation and empowerment, values of human rights and democracy, and anti-discrimination and tolerance. It is informed by a range of policies and research knowledge. It is delivered by both volunteers and paid workers. It is established through a voluntary relationship with young people. It is financed and managed in a variety of ways. It is quintessentially a social practice, working between young people and the societies in which they live. For these reasons, it has had to accommodate and deal with a range of tensions generated by this relationship. These include reconciling youth research, policy and practice, making sense of different youth policy agendas (European, national, regional and local), establishing a position in cross-sectoral activity, dealing with issues of training, competence and recognition, as well as furthering pedagogical, relational and methodological approaches to youth work practice.*

This publication should be seen as important because it allows us to understand history, enabling us to build on past successes and avoid committing similar mistakes. The various overviews of developments in Europe’s “youth land” have presented all of us with a host of new and interesting insights. It not only sharpens our historical consciousness but also helps us better grasp the present. This development is

particularly interesting because of the sensation of the past, or as the famous Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) calls it, "a historical sensation" (Huizinga 1970). Over time this can become a historical interest. A person who is interested in history feels attracted to the "foreign", "different" aspects of the past, and to the morality of history. This too is part of the problem of recognising the interest of youth work and social work today. This report encourages us all to continue to work on this in the future.

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# **Historical and intercultural consciousness in youth work and youth policy – a double odyssey**

*Filip Coussée*

## **→ Once upon a time in Blankenberge**

*This is a service, I am tempted to conclude, without a history and therefore, if it is not very careful, without an identity. (Davies 1999a, p. ix)*

**T**his is the conclusion that made Bernard Davies write his three-volume history of the youth service in England (Davies 1999a, 1999b, 2008). The youth service in England has recently come under heavy pressure. It can now be seen how a lack of historical consciousness leads to an impoverished discussion on the mission and quality of youth work. Youth workers are increasingly judged on the basis of efficiency criteria. They should support individual young people so that the end result of their work is less joblessness, fewer teenage pregnancies, less drug use, fewer school drop-outs, etc. Of course, youth workers should not turn their backs on social problems, but can they really solve huge social problems rooted in economic inequalities and social injustice with rather modest interventions in the individual lives of young people? Could it be that this formalisation of the informal learning processes is counterproductive? Could it be that these increasingly



outcome-focused youth policies ultimately restrict the necessary social and pedagogical room for youth workers to genuinely engage with (groups of) young people, to co-analyse their situations and the social and historical disposition of their lives, and to question current society. As a consequence of this shift, the call for more efficient youth work seems paradoxically to lead to youth work that is more difficult to access for those who need it most.

These kinds of questions have increasingly been asked in all European countries facing the same move towards measuring the quality of the work of “social” professions by looking at individual outcomes. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, there was a move to bring together youth workers, researchers and policy makers from different countries to learn from each other and to rebuild the foundations of a youth work practice that is grounded in its history of both individual care and social change. The aim was not to define a hard and fast youth work concept. It was recognised that youth work, just as youth itself, is a social construction. What the Blankenberge workshops aimed for was the “constructive deconstruction” of current youth work constructions. One way of doing that is by taking some distance, by looking behind as well as looking to the side. That was exactly what we did by comparing different youth work histories from different countries and revealing the central concepts and beliefs that underpin youth work today. This enables researchers, practitioners and policy makers to look with a more critical eye at some self-evident youth work values, tasks or beliefs.

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, co-ordinating the policies of the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, was immediately willing to support these plans. A first European expert workshop on the history of youth work and its relevance for today’s youth policy was organised in May 2008 in Blankenberge. In 2009 the participants of this first workshop gathered again, joined by participants from other countries (Coussée et al. 2010). In 2010, during the Belgian EU presidency, the decision was taken to spread the results of both workshops and even to go one step further, by inviting new countries to share their youth work histories and focusing on specific themes in youth work history.

### → The Blankenberge building blocks, Part One

The results of the Blankenberge workshops were the building blocks for the Ghent EU presidency conference on youth work history. In the first workshop, Flemish youth work history was discussed alongside English, French, German, Maltese and Polish histories. In addition to these presentations there was a more thematic input on uniformed youth organisations in Flanders and there was an overview of youth research in Finland, one of the leading countries when it comes to that topic. The discussions that followed the presentations were lively and rich. In the conclusions made by the reporting team it was emphasised that the work was unfinished. The rapporteurs identified five main issues (Verschelden et al. 2009):

- The history of youth work: the participants identified early on two different perspectives on youth work’s history. Some presentations took the “youth question” as the central discussion in youth work history, whilst others focused on the social question. Youth work in the first approach is seen as a practice that makes young people visible in society, as a distinct group with their own needs and views. In the latter approach, youth work is defined as an instrument to reduce social inequalities.

- The pedagogy of youth work: both approaches have to deal with the central tension that makes youth work (as all social pedagogical professions) a very complex practice, with its tension between emancipation and control. It was argued that the history of youth work cannot be seen as a progressive story moving from control and discipline to emancipation and liberation. Youth workers have always been engaged in both emancipatory and disciplinary functions. It seems as if the specific purpose of youth work inevitably reduces down to a force for social integration. Unfortunately, this is especially the case when working with low-skilled young people or other “problematic” groups. For them, youth work is much less about how young people and youth workers themselves define their interests, concerns and priorities. This evolution even widens the gaps between what Elias and Scotson (1965) called the “established” and the “outsiders”.
- The identity of youth work: all presentations showed the huge diversity and flexibility of youth work, adapting to societal trends and responding to young people’s needs. At the same time, participants identified in all this diversity some key characteristics of youth work. They were summarised as: being young together, often sharing an ideology or a project, nurturing associational life, providing opportunities for social contact, recreation and education, voluntary attendance and participation or even self-government by young people. There was a strong case for not reducing youth work to a single method, losing sight of its mission and social tenure.
- The politics of youth work: in line with the case against “methodisation” of youth work, it was argued that youth work is a social practice, meaning that youth work mediates between individual aspirations and societal expectations. “Methodisation” seems to restrict the youth work debate to an internal discussion and keeps the broader, underlying mission out of the picture. This makes youth work a useful weapon for all targets. This raised the question in the workshop of how far youth work determines its own agenda, a question that concerns all welfare regimes throughout Europe, shaping different relationships between civil society and the state.
- The practice of youth work: all the presentations showed that youth work is closely connected to the transformation of “integration problems” (seen as part of the youth question or as part of the social question) into “pedagogical questions”. This mechanism of “pedagogisation” portrays youth work practice as a mediating space between the lifeworld and the system. This Habermasian pair of concepts was introduced by Walter Lorenz in his introductory speech in the first seminar. “Lifeworld” stands for authenticity and identity development and takes youth seriously as a force in society, but it can also foster discrimination, nationalism and racism. A system perspective stands for equality, but it could lead to authoritarianism, ideological exploitation and a closing down of any possibilities for critical examination of living conditions. Lifeworld and system are intertwined concepts: one without the other would be impossible.

This last point, the dynamics between lifeworld and system, was chosen as the central theme for a follow-up seminar.

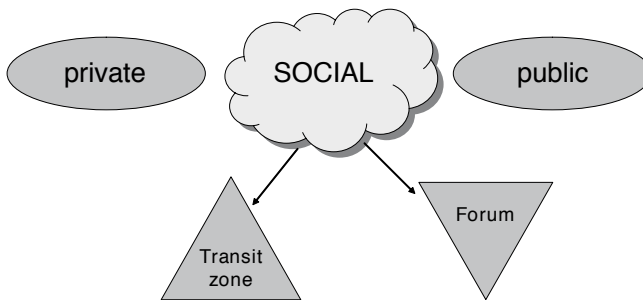
### → The Blankenberge building blocks, Part Two

In May 2009, youth work history was again the focus of dynamic discussions between some 30 participants. The countries/regions reviewed were the French- and German-speaking communities of Belgium, Wales, Hungary, Ireland and the Netherlands. This time, too, there were excursions beyond the comparison of regional or national youth work histories in Europe. We had a look at South African youth

policy in a historical perspective and we got an overview of what happened at a European level in both the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The field of tensions identified in the first Blankenberge workshop helped us to unveil more aspects of the complex nature of youth work. Both the distinction between the youth question and the social question approach and the system/lifeworld antagonism enabled us to frame our insights in social-pedagogical ideas about the relationship between the individual and society. The conclusions showed that youth work is inextricably bound with “invention and management of the social sphere”, mediating between individual aspirations (lifeworld) and public expectations (system). This way of approaching youth work opens up perspectives to foster social cohesion and at the same time accept diversity. Most of all participants felt that it was important to keep up and even embrace the existing tensions in the youth work field.

**Figure 1: Youth work as a social practice**



We re-labelled the tensions between lifeworld and system by situating youth work right in the “social” sphere and recognising that youth workers move the boundaries between the private lifeworld and the public system. We observed that youth work is increasingly constructed as a transit zone between the lifeworld and the system, focusing on individual development and smooth integration into existing society. Throughout history, but also today, we identified many examples where youth work functioned as a social forum. In a forum concept, youth work is not about enabling young people to adapt to new evolutions, but to question these trends, together with young people. What are the consequences of a changed and changing society? Are they in our interest? Are they in the interest of all young people?

In both approaches, youth work practice can look pretty much the same, because association, play and informal learning remain the central vehicles in realising youth work aims. These aims are different of course. In the transit zone approach, they are much more objectified in individual outcomes than in the forum zone approach, where youth work is more about (individual and social) learning processes.

This puts youth workers in the midst of a complex field of tensions. Participants agreed that we should not try to eliminate these tensions. History teaches us that if we try, the “social” itself will be eliminated. Post-communist countries and post-colonial countries, but also western neo-liberal (post-Fordist) countries, are all searching for a re-establishment of the social sphere – a sphere that was eliminated to escape these complex tensions. So far, we do not seem to get much further than the ongoing colonisation of the private lifeworld through the public system or the other way round. The social is a forum to negotiate power relations, to get to know and understand each other and the interests of others. It is not a transit zone to adapt to public expectations, nor is it an instrument to claim private rights. So the

“resocialisation” of youth work shows us that the most important question is not how to lead young people into youth work, but rather how young people can and may be present in society. What counts is not so much the access to youth work, but the access through youth work.

### → “Desocialisation” and “depedagogisation”

The tensions between the transit and forum approaches are not easy to handle. Some people try to eliminate the tensions by eliminating the social. They take the pedagogical aspect out of the social sphere. If that were to be the case, we would no longer need youth workers. Others try to escape the tensions by harmonising the tensions, trying to come to a consensus. They desocialise the social field. Youth work is then isolated from the social, cultural and political context in which its practice grows. This means that youth work is a tool to solve problems, but the definition of the problems is out of its reach. The counterproductive effect of this desocialisation has been shown in many presentations (with the advantage of hindsight): working-class kids are pulled into youth work practice with transit zone ambitions, and higher schooled youth gets support to self-organise their youth work forum. Instead of closing the gap between the haves and the have-nots, youth work tends to widen the gap. This is not to say that transit youth work does not provide any emancipatory possibilities to young people. It does, but it does within the existing social boundaries and power relations, which cannot be critically questioned. Therefore, youth work needs to be both a tool for social education (transit) and at the same time a social educational practice (forum).

### → The first European conference on youth work history

Building on insights from the Blankenberge workshops, the organisers wanted to serve a double objective through a larger conference on youth work history in the framework of the EU presidency: firstly, to spread ideas gathered through the workshops and, secondly, to make them more grounded in practice. What does it mean to frame youth work both in transit and forum approaches? How does this work out in youth work practice? What are the dilemmas youth workers are confronted with? How do researchers and policy makers enable youth workers to deal with these dilemmas? To accomplish these ambitious objectives, the organisers decided to focus on youth work history from three different perspectives: a regional one, a thematic one and a methodical one.

- Regional: as both Hugh Cunningham and Herman Balthazar illustrated in their keynote speech, the history of youth work has to be seen against the background of ideas about the way society should develop and the status of youth policies in this context. This was also shown in a concrete example from the Netherlands (Greetje Timmerman). An international comparative perspective is relevant because it helps us to connect youth work practice to the social and political context. In the two Blankenberge workshops, we had an overview of different “youth work histories” throughout Europe. In this conference we added Serbia (Zora Krnjičić) and Austria (Manfred Zentner).
- Thematic: there are many recurrent themes in youth work history. Sometimes they are introduced as brand new, as David Hansen showed us in his story on “positive youth development” in the United States. In this strand, we throw light on many recurrent themes and try to link evolutions and trends to the central tension between transit and forum: professionalism (Maurice Devlin), youth work and youth culture (Christian Spatscheck, Carles Feixa), and youth research and theoretical concepts (Juha Hämäläinen, Tony Taylor and Lasse Siurala).

- Methodical: during the workshops we investigated very different types of youth work with a long-standing tradition. On an organisational level, uniformed youth organisations were reviewed (Walter Baeten) as was the ECYC (Niels Elberling), the European Youth Forum (Giuseppe Porcaro) and ERYICA (Marc Boes). On the closely connected level of methods, we focused on youth information work and open youth work (Willy Faché) and work with specific target groups such as girls (Janet Batsleer), working-class kids (Bruno Vanobbergen and Frank Simon, Martine Vermandere) and ethnic minorities (Diane Watt).

The historical insights enabled us to discuss the essential features of youth work identity:

- starting from a shared mission and position for all youth work forms;
- with respect to the dialectical tension between diversity and universality;
- grounded in youth work practice and not externally defined;
- based on what youth work is and not on what youth work pretends to be.

In the concluding chapter, the rapporteurs try to identify some common threads in so many different stories and journeys, stages, shifts, influences, theoretical anchors and political initiatives. In so doing, they hope to inspire current youth work debates and to help to build a bridge between past and future, policy and practice, east and west, and north and south. The first European conference on youth work history was the continuation of a double odyssey: it was learning from history, but it was also a process of intercultural learning. The identity of youth work has not only a great deal to do with the changing status of youth in society, but also with the continuing transformation of our welfare states. To be continued.

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*Hugh Cunningham*

## **Youth in the life course – a history**

“Youth work” is an odd phrase. If we talk about “child work”, we mean the work that children do. Youth work means something different. Moreover, most centuries have done without youth workers. There is nothing inevitable in the emergence in the 20th century of something called youth work, something that has a pretty short history, roughly stretching over my lifetime though with a lead-in of a half century or so before that. What was happening, we need to ask, between the late 19th century and the mid-20th century that led to the emergence of youth work and what has encouraged its survival and growth into the 21st century?

I want to approach these questions by reflecting on youth in relation to what comes before and after it. We frequently speak of youth as “an age of transition”, and the implicit or explicit assumption is that it is a transition between childhood and adulthood, as though childhood and adulthood are themselves stable and unchanging categories. My assumption in this talk is that they are as slippery and unstable as youth itself, and that how we think of them affects deeply how we think of youth.

“Youth” itself, as a word, is not quite in the same category as child or adult. It

comes from Old English and German, and is linked to the Latin *iuventus* (which incidentally covered the ages from 20 to 45). People can say “I’m a child” or “I’m an adult”, but I have never heard anyone say “I’m a youth”. It is a bit of a puzzle to know how people did describe or think of themselves when they were, say, 15 in the 18th century. Like youth work, teenager is a mid-20th-century invention. People might say now, “I’m an adolescent”, but again not, I think, before the 20th century. You might think of yourself now as a young person, but that is a rather bureaucratic form, deriving, I think, from the British Factory Act of 1833. But if young people themselves do not think of themselves as youth, and have perhaps never done so, older people are quite happy to refer, often nostalgically to their own youth – “in my youth I used to ...” – or to talk about “youth today”. We are used to newspaper reports that might describe how “a gang of youths terrorised peaceful shoppers in the city centre”. What I am getting at here is that the word “youth” is one used by those who are not youths, it is an outsider’s word. The people who talk and pontificate about “youth” are not themselves youths. Youth also has dominantly masculine associations. Readers would have assumed that “the gang of youths” were male. It may be, and I would be interested to know, that in the Latin languages where what in English is called youth derives from *iuventus*, there are quite different associations and connotations.

I am going to focus on the period from the 18th century onwards, but I want to say a little about the early modern period, from 1500 to 1700. It is sometimes asserted that before industrialisation the transition from childhood to adulthood was easy and painless. In this view youth became a problem only in the modern era. Children, it is said, started at an early age to contribute to the family economy, helping around the home, gradually doing more as they grew older and stronger, and then getting married at an early age, thereby achieving the transition to adulthood. This is, in large part, nonsense. In the first place, the age of marriage across north and western Europe was in the mid- to late twenties and, second, high proportions never married. Third, there is clear evidence that the age of 14 was a common age to leave home, and that you normally left home to become a servant, either domestic or farm, in someone else’s household. One definition of being a servant was that you were under the authority of an adult. The same went for apprenticeship. Fourth, there is ample evidence from across Europe that the young were organised in societies that acted sometimes as the focus of revolts, sometimes as ways of reinforcing moral codes. The distinctiveness of youth was recognised. Finally, there is a vast discourse from adults about youth, most of it negative (Mitterauer 1992; Ben-Amos 1994). Here, for example, is Philip Stubbes in 1595: “Was there ever seen less obedience in youth of all sorts, both menkind and womenkind, towards their superiors, parents, masters and governors?” (Underdown 1985, p. 116). Note here that Stubbes, unusually, does not restrict youth to males, and note also his underlying assumption that youths should be under the authority of “superiors, parents, masters and governors”. You only need to spend a short time in the company of adults in the 16th and 17th centuries to find out that youth did not pass unremarked. You also do not need to be there long before finding out that the prized time of life was adulthood.

Let me turn to the 18th century. In 1741 the English aristocrat Lord Chesterfield wrote a letter to his 8-year-old son, Philip. It was in Latin, but I give it in translation (Pollock 1987, p. 147):

*This is the last letter I shall write to you as a little boy, for tomorrow, if I am not mistaken you will attain your ninth year; so that, for the future, I shall treat you as a youth. You must now commence a different course of life, a different course of studies. No more levity: childish*

*toys and playthings must be thrown aside, and your mind directed to serious objects. What was not unbecoming to a child, would be disgraceful to a youth.*

The point I want to take from this famous letter is the sharp differentiation Chesterfield is able to draw (but I doubt if we could) between a child and a youth – “what was not unbecoming to a child, would be disgraceful to a youth”. There are echoes here of St Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians: “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Cor 13:11). For St Paul, the transition is straight from child to man, for Chesterfield from child to youth, but in both cases there is a clear sense that there is a moment when childhood ends, and you put your childhood behind you.

In the 21st century, we have no such clear idea as to when childhood ends. I asked a class of 5 year-olds recently at what age they thought their childhoods would end and I got answers ranging from 12 to 21. Officially, in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it ends at 18. But I suspect that for many it is not childhood but youth that is ending at 18.

Lord Chesterfield's sense that there was a sharp break in life at the end of childhood was also held by a very different 18th-century figure, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau is often and rightly taken as a source and inspiration for 20th-century views on adolescence, so he is worth listening to. At the beginning of Book 4 of *Emile*, nearly halfway through the book, Rousseau (1974, p. 172) claims that we are born twice over:

*... born into existence, and born into life; born a human being, and born a man .... Man is not meant to remain a child. He leaves childhood behind him at the time ordained by nature .... As the roaring of the waves precedes the tempest, so the murmur of rising passions announces this tumultuous change; a suppressed excitement warns us of the approaching danger.*

Adolescence now becomes dangerous. Rousseau goes on, in a passage that must have puzzled those who had earnestly read his prescriptions for childrearing: “The way childhood is spent is no great matter .... But it is not so in those early years when a youth really begins to live. This time is never long enough for what there is to be done, and its importance demands unceasing attention; this is why I lay so much stress on the art of prolonging it ... prevent the youth from becoming a man all at once” (Rousseau 1974, p. 206).

There is much in this that we will hear echoed in what is to follow, but not, I think, immediately. *Emile* was translated into English in 1763 and it has been claimed that some 200 treatises in English between then and the end of the 18th century show the influence of it, but the influence derived from the childhood chapters of *Emile* not from those on adolescence.

It was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Rousseau's writings on adolescence were rediscovered, when the emphasis shifted from making the transition to adulthood rapidly to prolonging and drawing it out. Until then, most of those who wrote about the transition to adulthood were in favour of doing so rapidly. Thomas Arnold, often regarded as the founder and inspirer of the 19th-century English public schools, had no time at all for a prolonged youth. In 1839 he told the boys that: “The danger of the intermediate state between childhood and manhood is too often this, that ... it proceeds much too slowly ... If the change from childhood to manhood can be hastened safely, it ought to be hastened; and it is a sin in everyone not to hasten it” (Musgrove 1964).



What characterised the 19th century was a re-imagining of childhood. Out went the idea that children were born with the stain of original sin upon them, and needed above all discipline to bring them to a sense of the need for salvation. In came the belief, much influenced by William Wordsworth, that children came “trailing clouds of glory” from heaven. From being a necessary preliminary to adult life, childhood became the best part of life, the time when you should be happy and free of care. And if this was so, childhood was not something to leave behind, as St Paul, Chesterfield and Rousseau urged. If you let the child in you die, Charles Dickens told his readers, you die – you become a Scrooge. Psychoanalysis in a way built on this: your childhood, whether you like it or not, will define and shape the rest of your life, and you need to be constantly on the alert to see how it is doing this. The clearest evidence for this change in the status of childhood comes in how people write their autobiographies. Until the late 18th century, childhood got very little attention, now it is what absorbs them.

Childhood in the 19th century, it came to be thought, should not only be remembered, it should also be prolonged – it was, after all, the best time of life. That centuries-old way of imagining the life course, going back to Aristotle, in which you rise to the heights of adulthood and then decline towards senility, was now challenged by something quite different: a life course that starts out good, and goes downhill from then onwards.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, youth as we now know or imagine it was coming to the fore. Middle-class contemporaries began to problematise things which before had been taken for granted. Compulsory schooling and its increasing length (in England it stopped at 10 in 1880, and rose by stages to 14 by 1918) is the prime reason for the timing of this. For most of the 19th century in the majority working-class section of the population, the transition from schooling to work was relatively unproblematic. Children started working when they or their parents saw an opportunity, often intermixing school and work (school in winter, work in summer was a typical pattern in agricultural areas). What was novel about compulsory schooling was less that it was compulsory, more that it was full time. True, it took time to enforce this. Mothers, for example, for long assumed a right to keep back their girls on Mondays to help with laundry. But by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries “the habit of schooling” was well established. Children often worked at part-time jobs before or after it, but their entry into full-time work at whatever the school-leaving age was now took on an element of ritual. It marked the end of childhood. James Brady, born in Lancashire in 1898, described how (Burnett 1982):

*I knew that when I was 13 I would have to say goodbye to my schooling at Spotland Board School and become a full-timer at Heaps [textile mill]. ... I had to undergo the stimulating ritual of being “lengthened”, which meant changing baggy knickerbockers, long socks and elastic garters which stopped your circulation, for long, smelly corduroy trousers held up by stout leather braces. It also meant a new heavy brown cap, with a button on top and a thicker scarf to keep the icy blast out. This was the drab, but completely utilitarian attire of the traditional Lancashire working-man which transformed you in a day from boyhood to manhood.*

No youth for Brady, at least in his own self-perception. In fact, as other accounts show, on entry into full-time work you were at the mercy of older workers who would boss you around and play practical jokes on you. But this perception that you had reached manhood was not all delusion. Your wages now counted for something in the family budget. You had more spending money.

The perception of the boy that he had become a man on starting full-time work deeply worried concerned middle-class commentators, for whom schooling went on until they were 18. Reginald Bray (1912), with experience of London, wrote how:

*... one of the realities of the time is the independence of the lad. What is equally significant is the suddenness with which this independence comes. Until the age of 14 he has remained under a carefully designed system of State supervision, exerted by the school authorities; while in a large number of cases the discipline of the home has been an important factor in his existence. At the age of 14, as a general rule, the control of home and school end together. The lad goes to bed a boy; he wakes as a man.*

Alexander Paterson, with his own experience of Britain's public schools in mind, wrote that the primary object of a school is to "make boys into men ... It is very difficult at an elementary school, because the boy will look to become a man at the age of 14" (Paterson 1911). The public schools kept their pupils to 17 or 18. "What father considers his sixteen-year-old son at a public school as an adult?" asked another of these concerned middle-class men, Charles Russell. None was the implication, and yet the 16 year-olds whom he encountered, drifting into a life of crime, thought of themselves and were thought of as men (Russell and Rigby 1906). The policy implication was clear: everything must be done to prevent these working-class teenagers from thinking of themselves as men, as adults. If they were not children, what were they? "Lads" was the word they liked – Russell was a great propagandist for Lads' Clubs. The word had a pleasantly archaic and rural feel to it – one could think of "lads and lassies" playing innocently on the village green.

These anxieties of middle-class men help I think to explain the ready reception given to the new ideas on adolescence that began to spread in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. G. Stanley Hall's massive and influential two volumes on adolescence date from 1904. Hall's ideas could only deepen the anxiety. For Hall adolescence lasted from ages 14 to 24. The boys of 14 who were claiming to be men were a decade in advance of the attainment. Adolescence, said Hall, borrowing from Rousseau, was a new birth, and how those 10 years were spent would determine the success or failure of the adult to be. And in modern times, the period of adolescence was necessarily longer than in earlier centuries. This was because the individual growing up recapitulated the growing up of the race, and the more the race evolved, the longer it took to reach the present. The modern "tendency to precocity" therefore had to be halted. But even if that was done the road through adolescence was strewn with human wreckage, people who had failed in some respect to meet the difficult demands that adolescence imposed (Hall 1904).

It was the late 19th- and early 20th-century period that gave us some of the most characteristic institutional responses to the emerging crisis over youth. In Britain, the Boys' Brigade, the Church Lads' Brigade, the Jewish Lads' Brigade, the innumerable Lads' Clubs, and then, to cap it all, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, sprang into existence to give some shape to and control over the leisure time of young people. What is most immediately noticeable about most of them is their overt adoption of military organisation. But what is also notable is their religious affiliations. The Boys' Brigade was Presbyterian, the Church Lads' Brigade Anglican. They were in some ways attempts to retain the allegiance of the young who had grown too old for Sunday school. It is easy to focus on the social control aspects of these organisations, yet what must also be remembered is that the young were keen to join, boys who could not afford the costs of the uniforms for the Scouts often going to enormous lengths to acquire it.

The word “youth” was not at this point in time often used to describe what was observed. If youth did appear in the early 20th century it was often in a positive way, appropriate to a new century throwing off the shackles of Victorianism: youth heralded a new modern world, something to be celebrated. Composers wrote works for or about youth – Elgar’s *Wand of youth* was first performed in 1907. Full of the new hope, poets were drawn back to Wordsworth on the outbreak of the French Revolution, when “to be young was very heaven”.

The key elements that go into the later 20th-century conceptualisation and problematisation of youth were in place before the First World War. The roots of the problem lay in a potent fusion of contemporary biology, nascent psychology and economic circumstances; there was a sense that the future of the nation was at stake in dealing with it; there was the emergence of an institutional response in what came to be called (though not I think at the time) “youth movements”; and there was a prime focus on youth as male, the problems for males lying in blind-alley work and misuse of leisure time, whereas for girls the problems were seen to lie almost entirely in premature sexuality. The relationship between male and female youth is neatly captured in an early 20th-century book, *Studies of boy life in our cities*, which has one chapter entitled “The girl in the background” (Urwin 1904). All that was lacking before the First World War was the naming of all this as “youth”, and the building around it of a bureaucratic structure, at least in part financed by the state.

In the three decades that followed the First World War, the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, “youth” came to the fore. Take stock in the 1940s. War, for the second time in the century, “stirred the country into a state of concern about the welfare of youth” (Wall 1948). As early as November 1939 the English Board of Education had issued a call to action entitled “In the Service of Youth”, soon to be followed by “The Challenge of Youth”, these two together forming “the basis upon which youth work has since developed” (Brew 1957). In 1940 *The Times* wrote how “Youth clubs may be found in all districts of the city”. By 1942 in *Christian Youth Leadership*, H. C. Warner wrote how “We have seen the sudden outcrop of Youth Centres, Youth Service Corps, Youth Civil Defence Units, etc.” In 1943 there was a call for “adequate youth services” and in 1944 for “the development of youth work”. By 1948 (perhaps before?), there was a “National Youth Orchestra” (OED 1958).

In the 1950s there emerged another element of the problem, “youth culture”, its emergence described in 1958 as “one of the key phenomena” of the decade (OED 1958). Youth culture was closely linked with that other discovery of the 1950s, Mark Abrams’ “teenage consumer”. Historians have taken some pleasure in recent years in tracking back both youth culture and teenage consumers to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but in public consciousness and discourse they belong to the 1950s (Fowler 1995).

We need to pause at this point to reflect on the shape of the life course in the mid-20th century when youth had taken on many of the characteristics that we are familiar with today. Life became seen as a journey towards “maturity”, a word almost synonymous with “adulthood”. When Arnold Gesell and his collaborators wrote *Youth: the years from ten to sixteen* in 1956, it, like its predecessors on infants and children, was built around the road to maturity. There were maturity profiles for each age zone accompanied by maturity traits and maturity trends. Starting out as an adolescent at 11, over a decade the child reached the margins of maturity. But there was still a long way to go, adulthood or full maturity not being reached until the age of 25. “The 16-year-old youth,” wrote Gesell, “if he rises to

tiptoe can almost see the horizons of adulthood. He is himself a pre-adult." The journey might have been modelled on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's progress*, beset with difficulties that had to be overcome. From birth onwards there were stages that had to be completed, their successful completion duly noted down and ticked: smiling, teething, crawling, walking, talking and so on were the physical signs of progress, bonding with mother the crucial psychological one. Observers were on the lookout for telltale signs that there were problems: thumb-sucking, bed-wetting and so on. Emerging from babyhood and then infancy at about the age of 5, the years of childhood stretched ahead. Intellectually, children had to progress through Jean Piaget's stages. Physically, the improvement on the past was the dominant motif. Emotionally, these were the years of happiness, carefree and in many ways free. Our childhoods, our schooldays, we were told, were going to be the happiest days of our lives. But as childhood progressed beyond the age of 10, something rather frightening loomed ahead: it was called, not youth, but adolescence. Adolescence, we were told, would be hell, but on the other side of it, perhaps at the symbolic age of 21, lay the safe shores of maturity and adulthood.

Maturity once gained was a possession for the rest of life unless senility struck. The plateau of adulthood stretched ahead. If change marked the years up to 21, the opposite was true of adulthood. It was of course, reflecting one's new maturity, a time of responsibility: for men a job, a career, a home, a wife and children; for women mainly motherhood. In due course you became middle-aged, and then, if a man, you retired. In the end, of course, you died, perhaps having gone through the stage euphemistically called a second childhood, maturity and adult status lost on the final stage of the life course.

There were of course some adults who failed to achieve maturity, criminals, alcoholics and so on, some of them so immature that they needed to be confined or imprisoned. But most adults, went the assumption, were mature. But what exactly was this much-touted maturity? "Like truth" admitted one writer on *The adolescent child* in 1948, "maturity is difficult to define", and then proceeded to distinguish between physical maturity, intellectual maturity and emotional maturity, each of which went into the key category of maturity of character, the "integration of selves, vocational, sexual, social, and moral" that, apparently, all adolescents seek, and which, if achieved, results in "the poise and inner harmony which characterize the mature adult" (Wall 1948). Perhaps the key marker of maturity was sound and rational judgment. Adults therefore could be trusted to drive a car, to vote, to drink alcohol in public, to gamble, to have sex, to get married, to become parents. By contrast pre-adults, and perhaps especially those nearest to adulthood, youths, wracked by the storm and stress of adolescence, lacked judgment, and society, by law, prevented them from doing the things that adults did.

Adulthood, and the assumed maturity that went with it, conferred power on adults, power over those younger than themselves. But with power went also responsibility, something that could weigh heavily. In this perspective there could be nostalgia for the irresponsibility of childhood. Maturity might bring contentment, but less obviously happiness. Happiness, adults knew, belonged to childhood – as children were constantly told. Despite Freud, or perhaps because of him and the "latency period", childhood could be thought of as free of the anxieties, if also pleasures, that went with sex. It was still a time of innocence, of not knowing.

If adults constructed childhood as a time of happiness and adulthood as one of maturity, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that the really difficult time of life, the hinge on which success or failure might depend, was youth or adolescence.

It could not be anything other than problematic. The happiness and innocence of childhood was over, the maturity of adulthood lay ahead. What positive message could be attached to the years in between? None came easily to hand. It was problems that were all too easy to identify. As Frank Musgrove put it in 1964, recent decades had seen an outpouring of books and research on “the problem of youth today” (Musgrove 1964). Just how far youth was seen as a problem can be seen by consulting the index to the 1968 *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. The subheadings under “youth” read:

- “Civil disobedience”;
- “Cohort analysis”;
- “Delinquency”;
- “Delinquency: psychological aspects”;
- “Delinquency: sociological aspects”;
- “Intellectual developments”;
- “Sexual deviation: psychological aspects”.

For some 30 years after the Second World War, youths completed the transition to adulthood relatively quickly. There was a buoyant job market, and the age of marriage plunged to an all-time low in the early 1970s. But from the mid-1970s onwards the economic circumstances worsened, and it became increasingly difficult to attain the markers of adulthood. The ages of leaving home, of getting a permanent job, of getting married or partnered, all went up. Youths, it began to be said, were failing to recognise and accept the responsibilities that went with adulthood. Maturity was being indefinitely postponed. None of this stopped the marketers from playing on the consumption power that, despite economic circumstances, still lay with youth. Most of the age markers for the young we now employ were the inventions of marketers: ‘twens, teenagers, young adults and so on.

It is just possible that the prospects for youth are rather rosier than they have been for a long time; not very good, but in comparison to other parts of the life course, not as bad as they once were. In the life course as a whole, childhood is now becoming a time of anxiety. The news about children – obese, feral, self-harming, sexualised, prey to a consumer market whose ploys they do not understand, their rates of mental illness rising, their childhoods, in one influential UK view, “toxic” – is about as bad as the news we have long been accustomed to hear about youth. As for adulthood, it can seem to be less and less attractive to the adults who inhabit it. Time-short, consumer-oriented, lacking in trust, striving after an unattainable work/life balance where “life” turns out to be unpaid work for the family, adults are not exactly happy. Indeed, if we depict the life course in terms of happiness, we find a u-shaped curve where happiness is greatest at the start and end of life, and reaches its lowest point at the age of 44. In some extraordinary way, we may need to invert the stages view of the life course which dominated European thinking for so many centuries, one where adulthood represented the peak, and replace it with exactly the opposite. The happy times, the best times, lie at the beginning and end of life, not the middle. Youth comes sufficiently near the beginning of life to be able to participate in happiness.

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*Greetje Timmerman*

## **The relevance of the concept of “being young together” for youth research, youth work and youth policy**

### **→ Introduction**

“Youth”, like childhood, has been discovered time and again in the course of history. Complicated by the usage of different terms (“adolescents”, “youth”, “juveniles”, “teenagers”, “young adults”, “youngsters”, etc.), the youth period has been given different meanings, depending on different disciplinary perspectives. Although very different, these conceptions also have something in common, which is that most conceptions of youth are cultural constructions.

This seems to me a problem. I want to propose that a cultural conception of youth does not tell the whole story about youth. Secondly, these cultural conceptions are one-sided as they are generally constructed from the adult point of view and not from the perspectives or experiences of young people themselves (Coussée 2006). So, our knowledge of youth is incomplete.

In this paper, I would like to discuss a conception of youth that became popular in the Netherlands after the Second World War. In this concept, youth is understood not only as a cultural, but also as a social, category. The youth world is considered as a social system characterised by its own social structure. Furthermore, this



perspective is interesting because the meaning of group life is constructed from the perspective of young people themselves, as a form of being young together (Van Hessen 1965). However, after two decades of popularity this sociological concept of youth disappeared from youth research and youth policy as well.

There are several reasons for the decline in the popularity of this sociological concept of youth. Firstly, the tendency in youth research, from the 1970s on, to describe youth primarily in cultural terms and particularly in countercultural terms. Secondly, the decline of the youth concept as “being young together” can be understood as a result of an intensified process of individualism after the Second World War. In this paper, I would like to address and reconsider the relevance of the concept of being young together for youth research and contemporary youth work by presenting some preliminary results of my research project on being young together in three generations. If being young together is an (“essential”) feature of youth and if youth work needs a legitimation that is grounded in a conception of youth that takes as its starting point how young people themselves experience their youth, then youth work should reconsider this conception of youth as being young together.

### → Terminology

Although the terms “childhood” and “youth” have been used interchangeably, referring to different age groups, most authors seem to connect the concept of childhood to infants or young children whereas the concept of youth is often used for older children, from the age of 12 or 13 up. This age period is often described in psychological terms as “adolescence”, which – although not a new term – became a very popular term after the publication of Stanley Hall’s work on adolescence in 1904 and dominated the terminology scene in the 20th century.

The study of youth is not only complicated by different terms, the terms themselves have different meanings. Stanley Hall (1904) used “adolescence” as a biological and emotional concept, indicating young people’s emotional difficulties in coping with their developmental tasks, a period of *Sturm und Drang*. In the second half of the 20th century the term “adolescence” came to be used by sociologists, for instance by James Coleman (1961), who used the term to indicate collective forms of group life. New terms were introduced too, for instance the term “teenage” in America (Parsons 1959). To illustrate the variety of terms, the next overview shows the usage of meanings depending on historical period and discipline, and in the two language areas, Dutch and English (Table 1).

**Table 1: Youth terminology**

Age	Dutch traditional	English traditional	English variant	Dutch modern
11-12	<i>pubescentie</i> or <i>pre-puberteit</i>	pre-puberty	pre-adolescence	<i>pre-puberteit</i>
(12-13)		puberty		<i>puberteit</i>
-----	<i>puberteit</i>	-----	adolescence	-----
12-17		adolescence		<i>adolescentie</i>
17-21	<i>adolescentie</i>	adolescence	adolescence late adolescence	<i>adolescentie</i> <i>oudere jeugd</i>
(18-30)		young adults	emerging adulthood	(older youth)
21-30	<i>jong volwassenen</i>	young adults	emerging adulthood	<i>jong volwassenen</i>

Source: Brentjes (1978).

This overview could be made more complicated by adding other terms such as the differentiations early and middle adolescence, and other and older terms such as “youngsters”, “juveniles”, “teenagers”, etc. Whatever term is used, it seems that the transition from the family to the outside world of the peer group is one of the characteristics of youth which brings us to the meaning of “youth” as a sociological category.

### → “Youth” as a sociological category

Although the term “youth” is not confined to the second half of the 20th century, it seems that next to psychological meanings, sociological interpretations of youth became popular in this period. Partly as a result of the democratisation of family life, it became clear that the majority of adolescents did not experience adolescence as a period of turbulent conflicts and emotions (*Sturm und Drang*).

In the 1960s, the sociologist J. S. van Hessen had pointed out the importance of young people’s association with each other in his work *Samen jong zijn* [Being young together] (1965). His research among 300 older men and women showed that when these people were young – around 1900 – there had been a part of their lives as young people in which adults played a very minor role or none at all. They spoke in terms of “we”. This feeling of solidarity was often connected to the family and the neighbourhood or village where they had spent their childhoods, but it could also express a feeling of “we, the young ones”.

Other sociologists had also highlighted the significance of young people’s own distinctive world in relation to their socialisation and identity development. One was the American sociologist Coleman (1961), who, in his book *The Adolescent Society*, related young people’s group life to the spread of mass education. However, Van Hessen drew attention to a distinctive young people’s world which also – and perhaps more importantly – existed outside school. From his sociological perspective, adolescence was more than a transition period between childhood and adulthood, more than an age-related stage in the life course, directed at becoming an adult. “Adolescence” also has its “own social space”. In other words, youth is a social phenomenon.

Analogous to the education system, Van Hessen sometimes refers to a “youth system”. The youth system can be seen as a “mini society”, not completely separated from society, but separate nonetheless, a special temporary social and cultural space with an open view of society. Just as every society has its own structure and culture, we can also describe the adolescent world in terms of its own social structure and culture. Van Hessen regarded what he referred to as “youth sub-structure” as an orderly whole of subgroups, structured according to factors such as age. At what age does adolescence begin and when does it end? Adolescents themselves are also structured according to age; for instance, there are clear boundaries between the group of 14-15 year-olds and that of 16-17 year-olds. There are also other subdivisions in the adolescent world, such as groups distinguished by sex (division into boys’ and girls’ groups) and the degree of tension in relations with school.

As well as a substructure, the world of the young also has a “youth subculture”. Most of us think of the concept of youth culture or a youth subculture as being a fairly recent concept, related to the rise of youth culture studies in the 1960s and 1970s. However, Van Hessen points out that in the past there have also been groups of young people in society who had different values and standards from the mainstream culture. They are not always in conflict with the dominant

culture. Youth culture is not necessarily a counterculture; often it is clear that young people want to distinguish themselves, but less clear in which way they want to distinguish themselves. Young people want to be a separate group in the eyes of the outside world and to exclude children and adults, but exactly what it is that distinguishes them culturally is often intangible. It is in this “intangibility” that Van Hessen sees a common denominator in the various youth subcultures throughout history.

Van Hessen stresses the importance of investigating this adolescent substructure, because according to him we are inclined to overlook it. We tend to see mainly the cultural manifestations – taste in music, appearances, fashions and consumer patterns – in short, the “youth subculture”. We can see many examples of this tendency to study youth as cultural constructions, very often presented as “generations”: the sceptical generation, the lost generation, the protest generation, or (most recently), the “me, myself and I” generation, the individualistic generation, the narcissistic generation. However, what we see are cultural variations on a pattern, a structural pattern, and that structural pattern – says Van Hessen – remains the same throughout time, namely distinctness (Van Hessen and Klaassen 1991).

Finally, as well as structure and culture, Van Hessen adds a third aspect to the world of the young: personalisation. Young people set out to present themselves as distinct groups in public spaces, often displaying striking outward characteristics and behaviours. Van Hessen was thinking mainly of groups such as scouts, dandies or Teddy boys. He thought the concept of a “scene” was a good illustration of these public and collective presentations of being young. Our young people today also present themselves as distinct groups – such as hip hoppers or Goths – with the associated theatrical gestures in public spaces, such as big rock events or dance parties. Young people want to assert their identity theatrically, in public. According to Van Hessen “dramatisation” is the most outstanding personality-forming behaviour of distinctive groups of young people.

### → Van Hessen’s significance to youth research and youth policy

It is surprising that there was so little follow-up to Van Hessen’s theoretical insights and empirical research. Although the phrase “being young together” was widely used – it cropped up in a wide range of government documents, particularly in the first few years after the book’s publication – it is as though research in terms of youth sociology came to a standstill in the course of the 1980s.

I suspect this may be because from the 1960s onwards there was a tendency in the Netherlands to define the concept of youth mainly in terms of culture. Youth culture has been seen above all as counterculture. According to historian De Rooy (1986), the main reason for this was the need to see young people as the heroes of the future. Many youth subcultures have been described – often in a very lively way – from this perspective, in other countries as well.

A division arose in youth research: one stream emphasised youth culture or youth subcultures, while the other focused on the more structural positions of various groups of young people. Interest in structural features and relationships within the peer group resulted in numerous network analyses of groups of children and adolescents, often in relation to problem behaviour such as bullying and aggression. Much psychological research has also been done on the relationship between peer-group features and problem behaviour, or to use other terms “anti- or prosocial behaviour” or “youth at risk”.

However, there is scarcely any research which follows on from Van Hessen's youth sociology, seeing the world of the young as a distinct social space and paying attention to both its cultural and structural characteristics. That is a pity, not only because knowledge of this world of the young is likely to produce valuable insights into the social development and social functioning of young people within their own distinctive social world, but also because the lack of knowledge about young people's own world as a socialisation context all too easily leads to the formation of myths about today's young people.

### → Being young together in three generations within one family

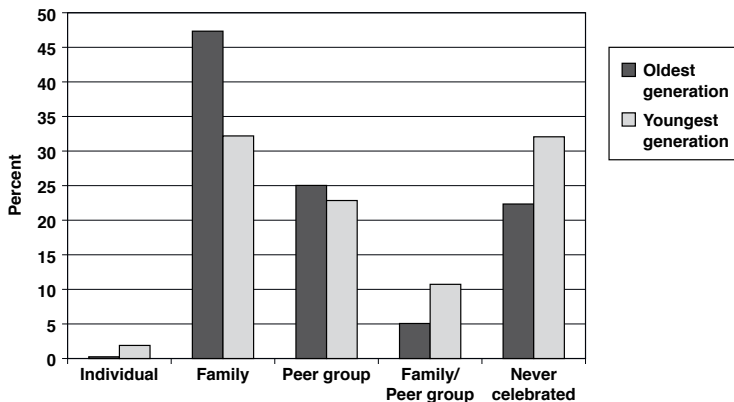
In our own study we found that a youth world also existed in the oldest as well as in the youngest generation.

Our study replicates Van Hessen's study, but expands the analysis to three generations of youth within one family. Three relatives of different generations within one family were interviewed about their youth life (14-24): a grandparent, parent, son or daughter aged 17-18. Our research involves 375 (youth) life-story interviews with three generations. The families live in the northern, eastern and middle regions of the Netherlands.

Firstly, we have tried to get an impression of the importance of youth life by studying patterns of time spent in youth (14 up). In the interviews we used week and year calendars to map out respondents patterns of time spent with other people, peers, parents and, also, alone.

How do young people spend major holidays such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, Easter? As well as the Christian holidays, we also asked about their activities on public holidays such as Queen's Day and the significance of events such as funfairs.

**Figure 1: Social and individual activities during holidays and special days**

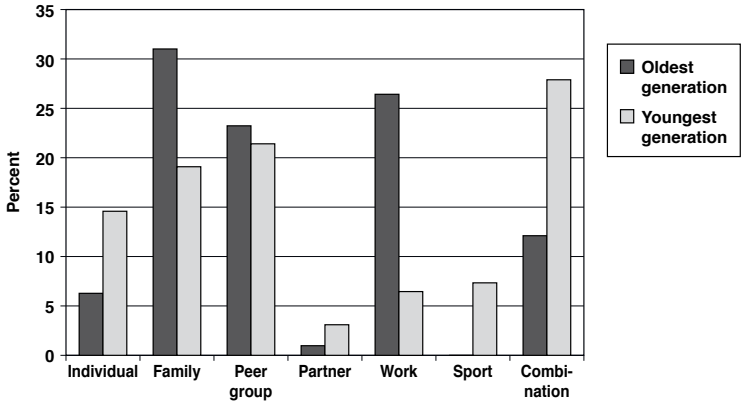


Our data confirm that in every generation being young together was an important component of youth life. Both in the present and the oldest generation about 25% of young people spent the holidays mainly with each other. Apart from that, the family was and still is the most important social context in which young people spend special days and holidays, although the family circle has dropped in significance (from 46% to 32%). Young people combine the time spent with their families with time spent with friends, but they now do that more often than in the past (from 6% to 11%). Not many young people spend the holidays in solitude. Both in the

oldest and the youngest generation this is a very small percentage, although it does seem to be increasing somewhat.

Secondly, we asked all the respondents to describe how they spent their time on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays in terms of time spent with others and also alone.

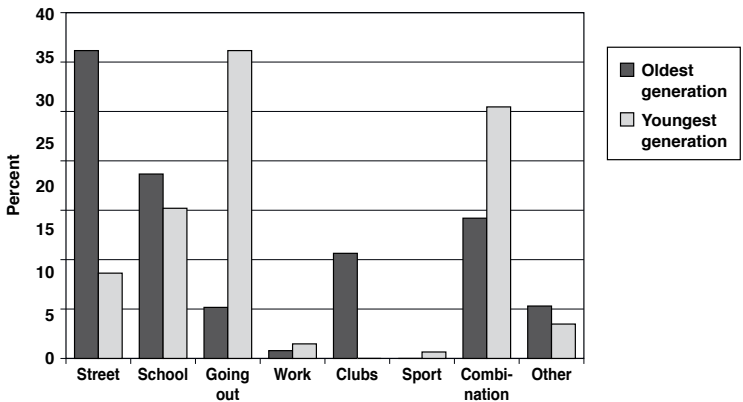
**Figure 2: Social and individual activities on weekdays and at the weekends**



We see more or less the same pattern: being young together was an important part of youth life, at weekdays and at the weekends. Both in the present and the oldest generation, about 25% of young people spent most of their social time with other young people. The family does seem to have lost some ground (18%, down from 32%). The family was the most important social context to the oldest generation, but these respondents also spent a lot of time at work. At the same time, we see a trend towards spending time alone (14%, up from 6%). However, it would be premature to conclude that the role of the family has become less important. It appears that the youngest generation more often spends time on a combination of activities, the two most important social contexts mentioned are the family and the peer group again.

Finally, to illustrate the importance of a youth world, we looked at the places where young people met each other.

**Figure 3: Where young people meet**



In the past, young people met each other outside, in the street. Organisations and schools are also relatively important social contexts to meet friends, but the street was the most important social world of youth. To some extent, “the street” is still a place where young people meet each other, but the youngest generation also, and most importantly, meets their peers while going out. Anyway, it is clear that in both generations youth creates its own social world, distinct from the adult world.

### → Conclusions and discussion

Van Hessen showed that a youth world existed around 1900, our study confirms that our oldest generation, who was young in the first half of the 20th century (between 1930 and 1955), and our youngest generation (born around 1990) both had their own social world, in addition to but also apart from the family. Both studies show the social world of youth as a social structure, a less spectacular image perhaps but no less important. Our recent study also underlines the actuality and relevance of the concept of youth as “being young together”.

Perhaps the disappearance of the concept of “being young together” is an illustration of the tendency in youth research to study cultural expressions (often as generations), each of them presented as a new discovery of youth. But presenting youth as a cultural construction only tells half the story.

The significance of Van Hessen’s youth sociology is that he drew attention to youth as a social phenomenon. In this view, youth is not so much an individual’s life stage between childhood and adult, but a social phenomenon on its own. Although embedded in and tied to society as a whole, young people also live their own youth life. As such, collective forms of being young – “being young together” – are not deviant forms of behaviour for young people, but normal manifestations of youth. This applies to both negative and positive forms of group behaviour. Socialisation during childhood and adolescence – young people’s influence on each other – is just as important to young people’s development as the influence of parents or school.

Finally, conceptualising youth as a social category implies that the concept of youth is not to be used as a synonym for childhood or vice versa. The concept of youth implicates a social world of young people themselves and is clearly tied up with the social structure of youth life, more or less distinct from the family, children and adults.

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# **Youth care, youth organisation and the youth movement in Flanders, 1850-1975**

*Walter Baeten*

**T**he past and present relevance of the youth movement in Flanders is probably unequalled anywhere in the world. Eurobarometer 2007 (European Commission 2007) reported that only 8% of young Europeans were members of a youth organisation, while figures from the Flemish Government show that 34% of young Flemish people are members of a youth movement, which is four times the European average. This historical analysis of one youth work initiative (the patronages) and one youth movement (Chirojeugd) shows the long history of Flemish youth work. This analysis is based on the interaction between ideology, structure, daily life at the local level and functions in society, in order to describe the specific identity of this initiative and movement (Vos and Gevers 2009). A comparison with France and the Netherlands shows the key factors in the survival and success of youth organisations in Flanders. In this way, European, comparative and historical research also proves its relevance for youth work today.

## **→ The origins and heydays of youth care: the patronages (1850-1918)**

Belgium was already heavily industrialised by the middle of the 19th century.



In the cities, the industrial proletariat was growing. Families and neighbourhoods were disrupted by the fast advancing process of proletarianisation. In 1846 one in three inhabitants had to rely on public assistance, which was confined to setting up municipal bakeries and soup kitchens. Within the ruling class, the idea gained strength that charity and repression were not enough to contain the social issue. Also, the education of the urban working-class children could not only be a task for their families. These young people were often even deprived of basic education, because they had to join the world of work at a tender age. Therefore, the ruling and middle-class citizens took initiatives like “Sunday schools” and “ragged schools” and also the “patronages”.

The word “*patronage*” – French for protection – referred to the origins of this model of organised care for young people in France. The first *œuvres de jeunesse* of this type were set up in 1799 by Chaplain Josep Allemand in Marseilles. It was followed during the 19th century by similar initiatives by other priests and lay people, members of the Saint Vincent De Paul Society, all over France. The patronages focused on moral protection, teaching and recreation of young people under the theme: “here we play and here we pray”. Religious activities like praying, Mass and confession were followed by games such as dominoes, chess and *jeux de boules* (Lebon 2005). In 1859, the priest Timon-David published a manual for this youth work with working-class children: “*Méthode de direction des œuvres de jeunesse*”. The last, eighth, edition appeared in 1964.

In the same period in Italy, it was the young priest Giovanni Don Bosco who took over the Sunday catechism in Turin in 1841. He was convinced that uncared-for boys “are not bad in themselves” and described his system of education as “the preventive method”. Following his “pedagogical intuition”, he began seeking “well-trained young people” to work with him. Some important principles of contemporary youth work can be traced back to Don Bosco: starting from the social world of young people, supplementary training during leisure hours, creating a climate of relaxation and confidence, and the involvement of young “well-trained” leaders (Coussée 2006, p. 46).

In Belgium, the first patronage was founded by the pharmacist Florimont Dullaert in the main industrial city, Ghent, in 1850. Some 15 years later, there were six Catholic patronages for boys and six for girls in Ghent. Games and recreation were the linkage between courses and religious education. In exchange for the opportunities of games, young people had to “be open to improvement”. In this period other Catholic patronages inspired by the examples from France and Italy were founded in Brussels, Tournai and Liège (Hermans 1985). During the first congress of Catholic organisations in Mechelen (1863), there was also attention paid to the German Sankt Joseph Gesellenverein model by chaplain Adolph Kolping, but the phenomenon of the young travelling *Handwerkgesellen* was not appropriate for a small country like Belgium. The focus of the Belgian patronages was the protection of working-class children, whose moral upbringing could not be guaranteed and whose family upbringing was flawed. The patronages would gather on Sundays to receive instruction through games and recreation, but also through study and prayer.

As a reaction to the Catholic patronages, the liberal professor François Laurent also founded in Ghent 10 workers’ societies or patronages with a similar goal: the moralisation and education of young workers (Simon and Van Damme 1993). His example was followed by other liberals in cities like Liège, Verviers, Brussels and Antwerp. Strictly speaking, patronages and workers’ societies had similar activities,

such as games (chess, dominoes, cards, billiards, etc.), singing, gymnastics and, instead of prayers, there were moralising speeches. Some patronages also offered elementary courses in languages, arithmetic and business administration. In the opinion of Laurent, these workers' societies could not survive without the support of the public authorities. His liberal patronages declined at the end of 19th century within the broader context of the general liberal malaise and the internal discussions of the liberal fraction.

Catholic patronages' activities flourished in particular in the Mechelen archdiocese, comprising the provinces of Antwerp and Brabant. Overarching umbrella federations were created in Antwerp and Brussels around 1890, and subsequently in other dioceses. But attempts before 1914 to set up a nationwide umbrella organisation were doomed to fail, while the Catholic youth groups' endeavours were under threat. The focus on serious activities was in danger of being sidetracked by ancillary activities, such as sports, theatre, singing or brass bands, which began springing up after 1880. The Belgian Catholic patronages reached their pinnacle just before the First World War: 1 100 youth groups and over 150 000 children were involved. They were concentrated in the industrial areas and big cities. They were the embodiment of youth work as an act of community development, with young people starting from a common analysis of their situation: the need for protection, moralisation and education.

In France in 1900 there were 4 168 Catholic, 90 Protestant and about 1 500 secular patronages (Cholvy 1988). There was no national federation of patronages. There were also different opinions on their functions and this can be illustrated by the fact that 1 458 patronages were affiliated to the Federation for Gymnastics and Sports of the Patronages of France in 1914. But still, the common motivation to organise patronages was the same as in Belgium.

In Belgium, many patronages were attended by a heterogeneous group of children from the lower classes and the lower bourgeoisie. The question remained of how the older working-class young people could be reached. It was clear that activities like a couple of hours playing every Sunday were not attractive for them. In the wake of the *Encyclical Rerum Novarum* (1891), there was a call for more social training and an operational link with the trade unions. This was only realised in a few places through social study circles, whilst other social services for young workers, such as health security and savings funds, were taken over by the social organisations. Certain patronage leaders started a search for innovative methods to renovate their youth work and they introduced the brand new youth work method, Scouting, into their patronages. In Brussels, Abbé Jules Petit was the first one to convert his patronage into a Scout troop; and in Antwerp, the patronage leader and entrepreneur Georges de Hasque switched to Scouting in 1913. Most of the patronages leaders were not aware of the underlying new differentiation that was included in Scouting – organised youth care versus self-organisation by young people. The fact that the patronages were local initiatives made it possible for them to survive the First World War, but they were losing their monopoly position. In 1914, it was clear that the patronage had to be modernised and transformed in order to be an answer to the actual needs of youth.

### → New youth work threatens the patronages (1918-34)

The 1920s were dubbed *les années folles* or the "roaring twenties". Belgium had still to recover from the horror of the Great War. In 1920, the Olympic Games were organised in Antwerp and sport became very popular. The implementation

of compulsory education up to 14 resulted in a clear distinction between school youth and working-class youth. The age of 14 marked a turning point for many young people. In Flanders, the landscape of youth work became very rich with the patronages and a few Scout troops, and the Young Christian Workers organisations were launched by Josef Cardijn in 1924. Other examples were the different organisations for students, purely religious organisations such as the Eucharistic Crusade and the much smaller organisations set up by the Socialist Young Guards.

In 1921, Cardinal Mercier tried to help the patronages (Baeten 1988). He appointed the priests Jacques Delmot and Jules Mauquoy as diocesan inspectors. Delmot was responsible for the province of Antwerp and Mauquoy for Brabant. It was not the plan of the cardinal, but it was the start of a separate evolution for the French and the Dutch-speaking patronages in Belgium. Based on his study of the French predecessors, Chaplain Mauquoy published the manual “Une oeuvre d’éducation populaire: le patronage de jeunes gens; guide théorique et pratique à l’usage des dirigeants” and founded in 1921 the National Federation of Patronages. This initiative for the French-speaking patronages was successful. Mauquoy promoted the patronages and a youth work initiative for the masses, as well as a youth work initiative for the formation of a Catholic elite.

Delmot was an exponent of a conservative vision of the patronages, giving priority to the protection of young people and religious education. He got the support of Cardinal Mercier who condemned the use of the patronages as “pre-trade union organisations”.

Originally, the patronages were primarily intended for young workers and it was therefore logical that they became the cradle for the Young Christian Workers. During the 1920s, there were different debates on the best way to bring the faithful – young people especially – into line with what was officially called “Catholic action” (Gevers and Vos 2009). Under the influence of the Pope, the church was building up a bulwark against secular forces: an army in battle readiness led by the hierarchy, where lay people operated as *milites Christi* or “warriors of Christ”. One of the discussion points was the question of how to organise the youth: based on social context and a high degree of differentiation according to class, for example the Young Christian Workers, or based on geographical, local unity, for example, the patronages. This was a crucial question for youth work, because it has so many consequences. The debate was settled by the Belgian bishops in 1927 on the basis of a compromise. According to them, “Catholic action” had to be organised according to class, while eschewing any demands for social changes and/or political aspirations. This implied that in the organisational structure of the future Catholic action for the Young Christian Workers, any trade union tendencies would have to be neutralised. In 1928, the Jeugdverbond voor Katholieke Actie (JVKA or Youth Union for Catholic Action) was set up as an umbrella organisation for the Catholic action movements of young people in Flanders. Associations that already existed joined the JVKA but retained their own character and activities. While the class-based youth organisations – the Young Christian Workers, the Farmers’ Youth Union, the Merchant’s Youth and the Student Youth – became the true representatives of Catholic action, the patronages and Scouts became affiliated as “auxiliary works”.

It led to very different situations at the local and regional levels. In the unitary federation of patronages of Brussels, the tension between the patronages and the Young Christian Workers increased further, while there were few problems in the federation of Antwerp. The linguistic split of the federation of Brussels was also the starting point to introduce slowly a new style in the patronages. The rigid master

was replaced by the youth leader and instead of board games active forms of play were introduced. In Flanders, there was an increase in the numbers of patronages to 244 in 1932, while the number of board members and patronage members decreased (Baeten 1993).

### → New life, the origins of a youth movement (1934-44)

After the foundation of the Flemish Youth Union for Catholic Action (JVKA), the patronages were again confronted with the task of demonstrating their identity and function within the complex of Catholic youth work. The priest Jos Cleymans, who became the new secretary of the JVKA in 1932, saw a possibility in converting the patronages into parish youth organisations for all. With new “leadership and work patterns”, the patronages were thus to become “auxiliaries” that prepared for the true representatives of Catholic action. Jos Cleymans and his colleague Antoon Aarts were inspired by the German youth movements Neudeutschland and Quickborn, and also by Scouting when they tried to breathe new life into the patronages. For the new religious programme in the patronages, they developed “action plans”. New expressive forms like banners, singing and marching were integrated into an active brand using the monogram “chi rho” referring to the militancy for the Kingdom of Christ. Youth should be conquered by youth. Instead of the board member of the patronage the (young) youth leader was born, whilst at the same time the profile of members remained the same.

Due to opposition from the class-linked youth organisations, Cleymans’s attempt did not succeed completely, but it did enable the patronages to transform themselves with new self-confidence into a “modern” youth movement. This concept was developed in the renewed monthly magazine for the young leaders and was presented during the annual course for national leaders. From 1939 the head of this new youth movement learned how a similar evolution had happened in the Netherlands, where the young guard (*de Jonge Wacht*) also took over the role of the patronages. However, they did not know that in the same period in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland youth movement methods were also introduced into the parish youth organisations. Here, there was a fusion of the organisations for children and adolescents under the name of *Jungwacht* (young guard).

From a quantitative point of view, the Flemish patronages had an impressive impact on youth. They boasted 23 107 members in 1937, roughly the same as the Young Christian Workers, twice as many as Catholic Student Action and four times as many as the Catholic Scouts. Against the background of attempts to channel youthful idealism during the late 1930s and the Second World War, a new development emerged in the different Flemish youth movements (Gevers and Vos 2009). As a result of the strongly normative expectations of adults, young people acquired a new self-consciousness. “Being young” meant being in search of a distinctive “youth style”. This was discovered in existing, but previously overlooked, youth movement methodologies that were originally bound up with the typical military style of the 1930s. The external elements were the first to appear: banners, uniforms, choruses, blaring clarion calls and the rhythm of rolling drums. All of these were attempts to give expression to the “new age”, but very soon other forms arrived on the scene, such as those based on outdoor activities, self-motivation and character building. The new youth work method was implemented at the local level. Some 33% of the 300 Flemish patronages joined the renewal that went under of the new name “chiro-action”.

During the Second World War in Flanders, local youth groups continued to operate effectively, leaning more and more towards youth movement activities. The

socialist youth movement was forbidden, but went underground in 1943 and prepared for the post-war period. Until spring 1942, there were no major problems for the Catholic youth movements, because they kept a low profile as “religious organisations”. In 1941, the youth movement Chirojeugd began definitive moves to become the successor of the patronages (Baeten 1999). A lot of young people joined the youth movements, because they offered opportunities for enjoyment during these hard times.

During the war, Chirojeugd formulated its concept of the youth movement in three pillars: first, the group divided into sections according to age so as to be organised in small sections led by a foreman and an assistant (so that in a similar fashion to Scouting, youth would be led by youth); secondly, again in a way reminiscent of Scouting, Chirojeugd developed its own system of requirements. The third element was the creed, a poetic text that called for the ideal to live. Such key texts could be found in many youth movements. With this concept, Chirojeugd was ready to build its organisation during and after the war. With the permission of the hierarchy of the archdiocese of Mechelen, Chirojeugd went its own way and emphasised its differences from the Flemish Catholic Scouts. It refused the proposal from the true Catholic action organisations to become a movement for children. Also, Belgian Cardinal Van Roey was not interested in following the example of the French Catholic Action for Children from 8 to 14 years. In 1928 a new youth initiative was launched there to replace the patronages: “*Coeurs vaillants/Ames vaillantes*”. This action was launched with the magazine *Coeurs vaillants* “pour tous les petits gars de la France” and was a movement for revitalisation inside the patronages (Lebon 2005; Feroldi 1987). There was a distinction inside the French patronages between those who were working with the new method of the *Coeurs vaillants* such as Catholic Action for Children and those who did not use this method. Cardinal Van Roey wanted the Dutch-speaking patronages to be open to everyone without distinction of class or age.

In 1944, Chirojeugd had 143 local groups, spread throughout Flanders with concentrations in the urban areas of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. Chirojeugd was ready to move forward in Flanders.

### → The development of Chirojeugd as a youth organisation (1944-64)

Liberation was perceived by some as a return to former times, while others hoped for a complete change of society. What almost everyone agreed on was the disgust at what had happened. The polarisation between left (the non-Catholics) and right (the Catholics) went on after the war. When Chirojeugd started marching in the streets with a typical youth movement style, some would say a fairly militarist style, it was not appreciated by everyone. But the Catholic, class-based and the general youth movements like Chirojeugd went on with their conquest within the context of continuity of the Catholic pillar.

In 1947, the general chaplain of the male and female Chirojeugd, Albert Frans Peeters, published a manual on the pedagogical programme of Chirojeugd. It consisted of three pedagogical mottos, three basic methods and a theme for each year. The three pedagogical mottos translated the ideal of the creed for young people. They must strive for happiness, be smart and embody the ideal of friendship. The three basic methods were the familial, the aesthetic or intuitive, and the active method. The familial method referred to the “ideal” of the patronages as a “youth family”, a reaction to commercialised leisure time. The aesthetic or intuitive

method appealed to emotions, to the experience of its own youth style. The active method referred to methods of self-governance and integrated the techniques of organisation based on troops and the concept of requirements. The theme of each year, with monthly appeals for action, had already been developed for the renewal of the patronages in 1936. This programme launched after the war was the basic concept for Chirojeugd until the mid-1960s.

The local groups were divided into sections with a typical name. The boys were the squires (*burchtknapen*, 9-11 years), the boys (*knapen*, 11-14 years) and the guys (*kerels*, 14-17 years). The girls were the sun children (*zonnekinderen*), the sun girls (*zonnemeisjes*) and Christian girls (*Kristimeisjes*). The local groups had their own building, usually provided by the parish. At the head of the group, the priest-director chaired the weekly leadership team meeting and monitored the religious nature of the activities. Alongside was the leader of the group, and then came the leaders of the sections. On Sunday morning, members participated in Mass and at 2 p.m. they met again in the playground of their building. They started with an opening band for the entire group, followed by activities in the sections. An hour later, the group would go to church. Afterwards, they would play again, but there would also be stylistic exercises like marching, community signing and storytelling. The activities for the youngest finished around 6 p.m., and for the older sections at 9 p.m. The highlight of the year was the summer camp with the whole group, where they lived together as one big family. In the early years they camped in buildings and not in tents. In this way, Chirojeugd created its own youth land integrated into the context of the parish.

The local groups were supported by a hierarchical structure, with the national federation at the top, and the diocesan unions and regional federations below. Chirojeugd owed its growth largely to the efforts of the many volunteers working within this structure. Together with a small team of professionals they produced publications, and organised training courses and activities, such as pilgrimages. From 1946 to 1954, Chirojeugd demonstrated its own youth style at its annual “national” day; subsequently it was held sporadically until 1978. As a complete youth movement, it covered all aspects of a harmonious life – social, religious, cultural, recreational – which placed high demands on its volunteer leaders. It marked the 1950s and 1960s with its “own youth land” – a golden age for the youth movement in Flanders.

The tension between building its own youth land as a youth movement and broader engagement in society could be formulated into questions, such as how to reach the unorganised youth, and how can youth work engage in society? The youth movement hankered after an appropriate relationship with youth (Coussée 2008). Its psychological, moral and social development benefits contrasted with the mind-numbing impact of commercial mass culture, an argument that was not very appealing, however, to the so-called mass youth. In this context, Chirojeugd has always asked questions about the generally dominant concept that youth work was based on class differences. The Chirojeugd population should be an accurate reflection of the parish population, but primarily focused on the “section of working-class youth that still needed to be influenced”. Albert Frans Peeters, chaplain and Chirojeugd pedagogue, spoke about “Chiro as a counter-offensive against the moral corruption of young workers”. During a conference in 1954, the signal was given to extend the scope of the activities of Chirojeugd towards “pat clubs”. Games afternoons were organised with a more laid-back character for children, while non-commercial film clubs were created for adolescents. The “patronage” approach was revived in the newly created Association for Parish

Youth Care: communion associations, film clubs, holiday youth groups, collection markets, Advent activities, etc. Chirojeugd saw itself expressly as a nucleus, a basis for the “renewal” of open youth work to be continued. The move to open youth work also continued to reach adolescents. The potential for open youth work was found, in particular, in the cities. The mild moral panic about adolescents succeeded in giving the new youth work forms a boost. Accordingly, the law of 1960 on moral protection of youth stated that under-18s were prohibited from entering dance halls without their parents. Chirojeugd also launched open youth houses and communities with new forms to steer the meeting and dancing requirements of adolescents towards pedagogically sound channels. But their scope often reached no further than the former members of the youth movements. It was at this time that Peeters invoked the image of the youth organisation elite spreading its beneficial influence among “the masses”. In 1961, he declared that Chirojeugd should not be a closed sardine tin but be more like a tea bag that adds flavour and colour to the environment. While the open youth houses were able to go their own way and became recognised as independent youth work with adults in 1969, the “pat clubs” disappeared in the 1960s because the youth leaders had to give priority to the youth movement itself.

Despite, and strictly speaking in line with, the philosophy of the tea bag, Chirojeugd remains pretty self-centred. This was also needed to be a good nucleus or tea bag. During the period 1945-65, the number of male groups rose from 167 to 634 and the female groups from 142 to 747; the total number of members and youth leaders rose from 13 444 to 90 772 (Langeriaert and Schodts 1985). This was also reflected in the expansion of the structures, the deepening of the methods in particular for the sections and the decentralisation of the training of the leaders. Since the end of the 1950s, Chirojeugd was also exported by missionaries to the Congo, South Africa, the Philippines, Chile, etc. In 1964, Chirojeugd reached its turning point, as well as its peak. The youth movement showed proudly the results of 30 years of youth work during the mass manifestation “Top 64”, although internally its methods were being questioned.

### → **Chirojeugd or the importance of being young together (1964-75)**

The youth growing up in the late 1960s felt less connected to the hierarchical religious institution. Young people were becoming more aware and experienced a growing desire for freedom. The Catholic action lost its attraction and Chirojeugd had no other choice than to adapt its vision for the youth. Groups no longer took part in religious worship and the Christian knight romance disappeared as a theme in Chirojeugd. The movement followed new roads in the context of Vatican II, a general meeting of the Catholic Church held in Rome between 1962 and 1965. The church was no longer presented as a hierarchical system, but as a community of believers where everyone had to bear responsibility. For Chirojeugd, it meant that the traditions and rituals of Christ the King would be replaced by learning and sharing together in imitation of the man from Nazareth. Chirojeugd no longer called itself “Catholic”, but “Christian”. Typically, many local groups replaced their Catholic-inspired group name with a modern, secular name.

A competitive troop system and style exercises, like marching, no longer fitted with this new spirit. In publications and training courses, creativity and free expression were encouraged. The old, strict style rules were contrary to the desire for more freedom and some groups forwent the uniform. But other groups maintained the traditions. At national level, the question arose of whether the multiplicity of

forms did not compromise the aesthetic or intuitive method. It concluded that this method, with its annual theme, badges and a treasure of songs, was still sufficiently effective. Therefore, it maintained the original uniform until 1974. But the old names of the divisions changed into modern names such as *speelclub* (6-10 years), *rakkers/kwicks* (10-12 years), *toppers/tippers* (13-14 years), *kerels/tiptiens* (15-16 years) and *aspiranten* (16+ years).

A particular issue was the search for possible co-education and mixed education. At national level, male and female branches grew increasingly towards each other and also at local level followed this trend slowly. Chirojeugd saw it as one of its educational tasks to organise joint activities. This developed into the common annual theme, and the training courses for leaders became a mixed affair. But in the 1960s and early 1970s co-education was more of an idea. After 1975, it would be structurally implemented. In 1970 Chirojeugd presented its "*Impulsmanifest*". The youth movement wished to contribute to a new society. Watching and criticising were no longer enough and Chirojeugd urged its members to be aware also of their responsibility outside the movement. At national level, it called on its members to participate in anti-capitalist events and peace demonstrations. Chirojeugd took positions in public for its target group, youth. From the mid-1970s, Chirojeugd asked itself whether its call for more action was not going too far. Chirojeugd did not want to transform itself into an action group. Children and young people were coming to the youth movement to play, not to fight on barricades. But the elements of play and society could be reconciled. To play as such was disinterested and therefore a form of social action. Chirojeugd concluded that it was now, next to a religious movement, also a "play" and society-oriented movement. In addition, the national level was no longer convinced about the one and only model of a Chiro group, an "ideal" to be pursued by each group. Each group was free to define what "Chirojeugd" means to them. This heralded a return to its point of departure, where every patronage decided and realised its functions in its local context. In 1975, Chirojeugd had to implement the new decree of the Flemish Government on the recognition of youth movements. This once again represented a turning point for the youth movement to adjust its situation within the legal framework. At the same time, it was an occasion to implement a change of structure, from a top-down approach, which had started a decade earlier.

### → A comparative perspective: the Netherlands and France

In the Netherlands, the patronages were founded in 1902 through co-ordinated action by the Catholic hierarchy as part of a pedagogical offensive (Selten 1991; Baeten 1994). The patronages had to give education to the young people who had left primary school. Protection from the dangers of the modern world came in second place. In 1908 there was a patronage in about 10% of all the parishes and in 1928 there was a patronage in half of all parishes. The number of members rose from 10 000 in 1908 to 33 500 in 1928. It means that about 25% of all Catholic boys aged from 13 to 18 were members of a patronage. The patronages as a work of youth care were concentrated in the cities. In the patronages, different types of education were offered: of course religious education, but also repetition of the school curriculum and job-oriented training. Leisure activities were the tool to attract members. In addition to games, separate clubs inside the patronages were funded for football, gymnastics, theatre and singing. The target group of the patronages were young workers, so they also entered into discussions with the trade unions. The bishops decided that subsections for young workers of the trade unions should be focused on the young workers who were not members of the patronages. In 1918 it was decided that young people under 18 years should not be organised



by class. This makes the patronages the only general form of organisation for the youth in the parishes.

After a new law on vocational education in 1921, the educational role of the patronages was taken over by schools, so they had to focus more on leisure time. But the clubs for sports, hiking and theatre became more independent and the patronage became an umbrella for all these activities. In 1928, the patronages were split into three types of youth work: first, there was the nucleus with the new youth movements, Young Guards and Crusade; second, the so-called free clubs for sports, hobbies and training; and, third, leisure time on Sunday evening. The youth movements were inspired by Scouting. The new approach needed young leaders and therefore training was organised for the oldest boys who had left the patronage. A uniform, banners and flags, rituals around a “law” and promise were introduced, and the central theme was the figure of Christ the King.

In 1934, the youth movement was implemented in 400 of the 576 patronages in the Netherlands. The Young Guards wanted to be a youth organisation to reach the masses of Catholic boys and it was very popular among 13-14-year-old boys. It was structured like Scouting on the basis of troops, several troops making up a division with a priest-director and a lay division leader. At the national level, the Young Guards were a federation, so there was no national board, but only a technical commission to guide the organisation. The system with training courses for the leaders guarantees a strong bond between the leaders and the organisation. The programme in the local divisions consists of games, outdoor activities and “learning” knots, map reading, signals, etc. Religious and liturgical themes were used as background for the instructions and games. The highlight was living as a group during the summer camp in buildings, because camping in tents was reserved for Scouting. The ideal of the boys community was the fundamental concept of the Young Guards. In the diocese of Haarlem the youth movement, the Crusade, was introduced in the patronages. It was quite similar to the Young Guards, but more in line with the tradition of the patronages. The youth movement method inside the Crusade was more rhetorical and too artificial to be boy-friendly. But with a division in almost every parish, it reached a lot of Catholic boys.

After the war, neither of the uniformed youth movements was re-established in the Netherlands. Their style and ideology were no longer appreciated by young people. They rejected the hierarchical model. The increase in welfare meant that the youth no longer needed an organised provision during leisure time. As a consequence of the adoption of a more secularist approach, there was no longer a necessity to organise the youth and to mobilise them to maintain the “Catholic pillar”. This also meant that there was no longer an organisational platform to support the youth movement. Youth movements were outdated, but many elements of the patronages survived and went on as specialised clubs for sports or the study of nature and youth houses.

What happened in France, the birthplace of the patronages? The late 1960s and early 1970s brought the definitive end of the patronages (Lebon 2005). Their role was taken over by day leisure centres. Side activities, like sports, or cultural-oriented activities, like theatre, had gone their own way long ago. There was also the attraction of the specialised or true Catholic action organisations and of Scouting. Children preferred the more specialised activities and there was no need for added education any more since the age for compulsory education had risen to 16 years. There was a collapse in cultural practice, with a disaffection from the *rites de passages*, a reduction in the number of children attending catechism and a reduction in the number of priests.

## → Conclusion

One of the key factors in explaining the emergence and success of the youth organisation and youth movement Chirojeugd is the favourable environment of the parishes, where priests organised youth work together with young people. This situation was offered by the successful transition of the Catholic pillar (Hellemans 1988). The local setting of a parish with a lot of young people created an opportunity for anchoring the youth movement. In contrast to the Netherlands, where the patronages were founded after an appeal from the bishops, the patronages and groups of Chirojeugd started as a local initiative in line with the tradition of other youth work in Flanders. In contrast to France, where the renewal of the patronages resulted in the Catholic Action for Children, the modernisation of the Flemish patronages resulted in a youth organisation for children and adolescents. It gave an opportunity for a continuous line from membership of the youth movement to leadership in it. Going in search of the balance between a desire to provide youth work for all and the reality of youth work with the middle classes means that the youth movement has to be adapted each time to the needs of young people. This is what maintains the tradition of local youth work. The patronages were youth care organised to protect and to guard young people against the dangers of the world. They offered education and organised leisure time to attract young people. From 1934 they introduced the youth movement method in order to remain attractive. In the new approach they wanted young people to “conquer” young people. They presented themselves as providing parish youth work for all, without any distinction according to class or age. This last element was important because the future leaders grew up inside the movement. The new style and ideology touched the young people. There was a balance in the new method between the principles of self-governance, the responsibility of leadership and the hierarchical model. After 1964, Chirojeugd evolved from a youth organisation into a youth movement, where being young together was a meaningful activity in itself. There was a permanent tension between the hierarchical model and the new style. The discussions on the meaning of youth work led to a new balance with less ideology and interactive bottom-up pedagogical support. The importance of being young together became the inspiration and motivation for the youth leaders to go on with their youth movement. This helped them to survive the secularisation of society, because they found an internal driving force. Also youth policies gave strong support and wanted the youth movements to organise young people and to play a more active role in society.

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# **Aimé Bogaerts and his travelling holiday camp, Gentse Volkskinderen: a soft socialist propaganda tool on the road (1898-1915)**

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## **→ Introduction**

In April 1898, the teacher Aimé Bogaerts (1859-1915) founded the Gentse Volkskinderen. This group consisted of boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14 who regularly came together to act, sing and do gymnastics. The Gentse Volkskinderen would become known primarily as a “travelling colony”. Initially, these tours were limited in time and space, but from 1902 on, the *Volkskinderen* travelled for several weeks at a time through France, Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg. These tours served both an educational and a political-ideological objective. From the educational point of view, they constituted an important supplement to traditional education. Under the motto “Don’t rely on the school alone”, Bogaerts, inspired in this strongly by Paul Robin, stood for holistic education. We will return to this later. Politically and ideologically, the tours of the Gentse Volkskinderen constituted an important means of propaganda for Ghent socialism, which advertised itself with increasing zeal at the end of the 19th century.

After the foundation of a socialist co-operative (*Vooruit* 1880) in Ghent – one of the first cities on the European continent to undergo intensive

industrialisation – and particularly during the years of struggle for the general franchise (up until 1893), Ghent social democracy broke through as a political and mass social movement (Vanschoenbeek 1995). In a relatively short period of time, the “Ghent social-democratic model” would not only constitute a leading model for the workers’ movement in Belgium but also acquire a reputation for itself abroad. Bogaerts considered *Volkskinderen* as “the heralds of the workers’ movement, the peace emissaries who have to embody the call of Marx: ‘Workers of the world, unite!’”<sup>1</sup>

Up until now, little attention has been paid to the history of the *Volkskinderen*. In his book on the breakthrough of socialism in Flanders, Vanschoenbeek wrote some short comments on the *Volkskinderen* when dealing with the history of the socialist youth movements. However, he mainly showed an interest in the political dimensions of this history. In this article, we want to analyse Bogaerts’ initiative primarily from the perspective of the “child at risk”. The history of the “child at risk” is a story of continual expansion. It is a story about the constant creation of new children at risk with, as a result, the introduction of new measures in order to eliminate the risks. It is a story that most authors trace back to the beginning of the 19th century, at a time when numerous initiatives were developed for abandoned children, foundlings, vagrants and orphans, in short in order to save morally endangered children. It would mean the launching of efforts to reduce sharply the number of children at risk, a process that, paradoxically enough, gave rise to increasing numbers of new categories of children at risk. This observation led Jeroen Dekker to conclude that what educators promisingly proclaimed as the “Century of the Child” became largely the “Century of the Child at Risk” (Dekker 2009). “At risk” was defined in many ways, ranging from presumed problem behaviour by children and youths and the families they came from, to children and youths with a particular physical or mental handicap.

In our analysis of the Gentse *Volkskinderen*, we give “at risk” a somewhat idiosyncratic interpretation and situate the “being at risk” of the *Volkskinderen* on two levels. In the first instance, we interpret the Gentse *Volkskinderen* as children “at risk” on the political-ideological level. With his initiative, Aimé Bogaerts wanted to convince the parents of the working class to take their children away from the activities of the liberal workers’ associations founded in the 1860s by the Ghent University professor François Laurent, because he absolutely did not concur with the adage that one had to instil morals into workers by enlightening them. The initiatives of the liberal workers’ associations had, according to them, an important function as regards instilling morality and socialising. It was there that children and youth were convinced that God, the family and property constituted the pillars of society. There, the child was quarantined against contagious social infections of all kinds, such as alcohol abuse or prostitution, and acquired the ability to provide for his or her own needs out of a sense of duty (Simon and Van Damme 1993). Compulsory school attendance, thrift and workers’ associations were seen as the answer to the social question: the family hearth was formed, the moral order was founded, and, at the same time, socialism was vanquished. The ideal that Bogaerts had in mind was that of the formation of a politically and ideologically sound socialist child. Secondly, Bogaerts was convinced that the worker’s child was also endangered on the educational level. He postulated a rationalistic educational project that was characterised by a scientific and rational basis and thus had nothing to do with supernatural interventions. Bogaerts showed himself here to be a radical opponent

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1. *Vooruit*, 27 July 1902.

of Catholic education, which he blamed for “permanently poisoning the heart and the brains of the working-class children”.<sup>2</sup> Both of these perceptions of the child at risk will be central in this article. In addition to these conceptualisations of the child at risk, we will pay attention to the image of the child that is taking risks, a little studied topic in the history of education. This refers to “children and youth who take active risks in creative ways, who are active makers of history, who step beyond the bonds of tradition, defy age restrictions, challenge accepted norms and institutions, and help create new cultural practices, values, and sensibilities” (SHCY 2008).

In order to map out our analysis, we turn to various kinds of primary sources. Thus, first, there are letters and diary reports of some of the children who participated in the travelling colony. Then, Bogaerts, who at that time was already the editor-in-chief of *Vooruit*, reported almost daily on the adventures of the *Volkskinderen* in the newspaper itself. Finally, our analysis is built upon certain visual sources.

### → Aimé Bogaerts and the Ghent political and educational context in the second half of the 19th century

At about the same time that the socialist co-operatives developed, the workers’ associations also emerged. In contrast to the co-operatives, the initiative for the workers’ associations did not come from the workers themselves but from the bourgeoisie. An important figure in Ghent was the aforementioned liberal, François Laurent. Laurent considered the social evolution of the 19th century in Ghent to be alarming. He understood the social problems that had arisen as a result of the moral degeneration of the workers and interpreted the co-operatives and the rising socialist movement as clear signs of immorality. They threatened the neatness, the intelligence, the good family life, and the sensitivity that, according to Laurent, were so typical of the culture and morality of the bourgeoisie. In order to ensure social order, consequently, there needed to be a set of moralising initiatives taken for the workers’ children at risk. Education was the ideal instrument to put the “new barbarians” once again on the right moral path. The liberal patronages, founded after the example of the Catholic patronages, launched a concrete initiative. The objective of patronages was to keep workers’ children and youth off the streets as much as possible by organising lectures, cultural activities, walks and day trips. In this way, one hoped to improve the family life of the workers’ families economically, morally and intellectually. Laurent advocated the formation of liberal patronages because he expected to convince workers’ children in this way of the value of freethinking education. Indeed, as long as they continued to participate in the Catholic patronages, the chances were that they would continue to be advocates of the Catholic schools. The battle against the Catholics and their initiatives constituted an important motive for Laurent and the liberals. In January 1875, they had founded *l’Avenir* in order to support secular education financially as well as to enhance the morals of the working class. The liberal patronages were also paid for and supported by *l’Avenir*. The free liberal school in Sint-Amandsberg (near Ghent), founded in 1886 as a rationalist school, was one of the freethinking schools supported by *l’Avenir*. The name “rationalist school” was used to indicate the schools where no religious instruction at all was provided and that were clearly anti-dogmatic and anticlerical. It is here that the figure of Aimé Bogaerts first emerged. Bogaerts, son of a primary school teacher and since 1878 himself a primary school teacher in Ghent’s municipal schools, would be one of the driving

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2. *Ibid.*, 9 August 1900.

forces between 1886 and 1896 behind the free liberal school in Sint-Amundsberg. At first sight, a remarkable paradox is apparent here: Bogaerts, who would enter history as a notorious socialist, appears here in a strongly liberal context. The key to this paradox lies in the *Cercle progressiste de Gand*, which Bogaerts joined in 1890. Founding the school, the Ghent Liberal Party combined two different liberal factions: the doctrinaires and the progressives. Both liberal poles provided capital and pressure on the parents: the executive, service-providing and educational tasks were in the hands of the progressives; a workers' population, influenced by socialism, provided the clientele. When, in the aftermath of the elections of June 1890, a split occurred in the Liberal Party, the doctrinaires boycotted the school as they accused the progressive wing of having too close a relationship with the socialists. The school closed its doors in 1896. While Bogaerts initially saw himself more in the liberal camp (for example, he had taken out membership of the cultural society *Willemsfonds*), he finally opted for socialism. Although he had been a member since 1890 of *Vooruit*, he only became a socialist openly in 1893 when he founded the Belgian Socialist Teachers' League. From that moment on, Bogaerts would become one of the prominent figures within the Ghent socialist freethinking world. In 1894, as a member of the Ghent *Libre Pensée*, he joined the *Socialistische Vrijdenkersbond* (Socialist Freethinkers Federation) and he founded the *Vlaamse Vrijdenkersfederatie* (Flemish Freethinkers Federation). Shortly thereafter, in 1895, he became the founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of the freethinkers' journal, *De Rede* (Reason). Without any doubt, Bogaerts was one of the driving forces behind the Flemish Freethinkers Federation. He wrote several popularising documents, delivered many lectures throughout Flanders and was responsible for the structural organisation of the federation (Tyssens 1989). In 1901, Bogaerts bid farewell to education. He became the editor-in-chief of *Vooruit* for a high salary, which was obtained after laborious negotiations. Nevertheless, he continued to be occupied with education. Bogaerts paid a lot of attention to articles on the education and care of children at home. More specifically, his "Sunday talks" were well known. Young working-class women needed to be taught the importance of childcare and hygiene. His articles also dealt with child mortality and birth control, topics which made it possible to spread his Neo-Malthusian viewpoints. He supported the socialist female movement too. However, he had set his heart on the *Volkskinderen*. It makes Bogaerts a good example of a socialist educationalist with an anarchistic touch who was not afraid of practical commitments.

### → The *Volkskinderen* as a travelling colony

In the summer of 1899, Aimé Bogaerts organised for the first time a multi-day journey for the *Gentse Volkskinderen*. Bogaerts took his inspiration from different places. First, the liberal workers' associations undoubtedly served as an important example. In addition, Bogaerts was also clearly influenced by the school excursions that took place in the Cempuis orphanage (France) founded by Paul Robin (Sluys 1939). These excursions were perfectly in line with Robin's ideas about the importance of holistic education. Not only the pattern of these excursions but also the cities visited in France greatly resembled the journeys of the *Gentse Volkskinderen*. On their first tour, the *Volkskinderen* and their monitors went for 12 days by foot and train through Belgium, with cities like Antwerp, Mechelen, Brussels, Namur, Seraing and Liège on the programme. In the mornings, they generally travelled; in the afternoon the children played or visited "industrial institutions".<sup>3</sup> In the evenings, they generally performed. A performance consisted usually of singing songs

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3. *Ibid.*, 7 August 1899.

interspersed with the performance of some plays written by Bogaerts himself. Most of these plays were extremely moralising and stressed the importance of respect for older people, the value of protecting animals, or the danger of ungratefulness and insensitivity. These performances were presented not only during the long summer journeys. At other times of the year, too, the children travelled for a day or more to a Belgian city to present their musical plays. In this was manifested a very important aspect of the tours organised by Bogaerts. He wanted to present an example of the fraternity that had to form the nucleus of the Socialist Party. "They were splendid propaganda days. Hearts softened; eyes shone with love; here and there one blinked away a tear. And of this atmosphere, in the packed halls, we always took the opportunity to address the audience, to point them to the wonderful future that the Socialist Party envisions, to the improvements and solutions that we advocate, to the fraternity, which closely unites all workers, to the duty of parents to provide a true socialist education for their children."<sup>4</sup>

In the summer of 1902, Bogaerts together with the *Volkskinderen* crossed the Belgian frontier for the first time for a 14-day tour through France, Switzerland, Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In the coming years, these journeys would be repeated each summer, except for 1908, when funds were missing to pay for the trip. For Bogaerts himself, these trips had a threefold objective: (1) "formation together and active education", (2) "winning the hearts everywhere in order to encourage the formation of groups of children", and (3) "spread the good seed, words of harmony and love, of co-operation and progress".<sup>5</sup> Although it was not made explicit, these tours had a fixed format in order to realise these objectives as well as possible. The first striking characteristic of the travelling colony was its "open end". Bogaerts, a couple of female companions, and about 30 *Volkskinderen* between 8 and 16 years old departed, generally around the middle of August, by train from Ghent but it was never fixed in advance when the company would return. This had little to do with practical matters, and more with the enthusiasm that carried Bogaerts along, despite the long hours of train travel and the extensive route. "What we have anticipated happened. The friends here did not let us leave. Thus, we sacrifice ourselves and stay here. What a sweet sacrifice!"<sup>6</sup> During the 1905 tour, for example, the children remained eight days in Paris while the day before it had still been announced in the *Vooruit* that they would probably stay four days in Paris. "But nothing is fixed and only in my next letter will I be able to say when we will arrive back in Ghent."<sup>7</sup>

The communication with the "home front" was another special characteristic of the travelling colony. Bogaerts, as the editor-in-chief of *Vooruit*, wrote a travel report almost daily for the newspaper and regularly sent telegrams and postcards "in order to reassure the parents".<sup>8</sup> The telegrams and postcards were then posted in the windows of the party offices so that the parents could come and see them. The extensive reporting did not have just an informative function. Bogaerts' reports show clearly how much he also wanted to convince the parents of the importance of the entire enterprise. This importance applied to the moral and social development of the children. "When all the workers' children have embraced each other

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4. Ibid., 8 June 1901.

5. Ibid., 1 September 1901.

6. Ibid., 22 August 1902.

7. Ibid., 28 August 1905.

8. Ibid., 13 August 1903.



in their youth, and learnt to love each other, no potentate, however powerful, will give them weapons in order to murder each other."<sup>9</sup> But it was just as crucial for the parents to be fully aware of the role that their children were playing in the realisation of the "good cause". The parents had to take leave of their children for a long time, and that sacrifice needed to serve a higher interest. "Full of confidence and love, the poor Ghent workers have sent the dearest of their possessions, their own children, hundreds of hours away in order to proclaim everywhere the unity of the Socialist Party."<sup>10</sup> For the same reason, Bogaerts called on the parents and other members and sympathisers of the Socialist Party to go to the station to give a massive welcome to the children each time they arrived home. The *Volkskinderen* had to be welcomed as they were welcomed in all the foreign cities: with a band in front, in procession, on the way to the party offices. Whether or not Bogaerts' call was always responded to massively is not immediately clear. After the arrival from Paris in 1905, he wrote in the *Vooruit*: "The parade was not very long but it succeeded in width."<sup>11</sup>

The content of the tours in foreign countries had the same pattern as the tours in Belgium. The group always left by train from Ghent and was then under way for almost a full day to the first destination. In the mornings, one generally travelled by train but also on foot. At the destination, local socialist organisations and dignitaries generally received the travelling colony, after which time there was a procession to the local party offices. In the afternoons, they visited socialist projects and co-operatives such as the slate quarries in Angers, the cloth factory and the co-operative furniture factory in Elboeuf, and the *coopératif* in Guise. These were interspersed with more touristic outings to the beach or walks through the Jura mountains. Every evening, the children gave a performance. Bogaerts reported the reactions of the local people to these performances with ever-recurring superlatives. "One embraced the children, bore them in triumph. Everywhere flags, enthusiasm, fire, love. Are these people frantic in this beautiful, beautiful country? This is extraordinary."<sup>12</sup> At the end of the performance in Lille, "Bogaerts himself had to speak to the crowd to get them to stop calling for encores because the children were too tired."<sup>13</sup> It was not only Bogaerts' report that was marked by inexhaustible enthusiasm, the local socialist press also reported with high praise for "the pupils of *Vooruit*". "Never have our operatic choirs, not even our choirs of gifted amateurs, perfectly trained, approached this perfection. It is absolutely astonishing ... They dance, move around, do Swedish gymnastics, pantomime, ... what can't they do?"<sup>14</sup> The enthusiastic reception of the children was also manifested when the children had to be distributed among the host families. Bogaerts described scenes of quarrelling and weeping women in order, come what may, to receive a *Volkskind*. At one point, it led him to sigh: "Oh, if we could only cut our children into pieces and then give everyone a piece."<sup>15</sup> Bogaerts himself also drew up a few guidelines that the host families had to follow. In his "Recommendations to the adoptive parents", the care, the health, and the hygiene of the children were central. The host families were

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9. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1900.

10. *Ibid.*, 28 August 1902.

11. *Ibid.*, 6 September 1905.

12. *Ibid.*, 20 August 1902.

13. *Ibid.*, 13 August 1902.

14. *Journal de Caen*, 1905 (Elvire De Baets Archives, AMSAB Ghent).

15. *Vooruit*, 10 August 1904.

asked to take good care of the children (no alcohol, no tobacco, time to wash), without spoiling them.<sup>16</sup> The moralising tone of the seven guidelines concerned not only the children but also the host families themselves (“Rushing serves nothing. One must leave on time”). The struggle for the children gave a headache not only to Bogaerts but also to the local organisers. Bogaerts quoted the burgomaster of Nouzon: “Of all the preparations for your reception, the most difficult was the distribution of the children. I was almost tearing my hair out because I was supposed to have favoured friends. And imagine,” he sighed, “I didn’t dare take one myself!”<sup>17</sup> Still, the Gentse Volkskinderen were not equally welcome everywhere. On every tour, there was always a city where the performance of the children was prohibited or boycotted. Thus, in 1904, “the reactionary municipal council” of Amiens refused permission for the appearance of the *Volkskinderen* in “the Big Circus”.<sup>18</sup> In 1905, the burgomaster of Le Havre prohibited carrying flags, forming processions, and the public singing of songs when the *Volkskinderen* arrived. “What an ass! Thirty socialist children come to his city with flowers in their hands, a smile on their lips, singing the soft, hopeful children’s song of peace and human love and this crazy loon ... is afraid.”<sup>19</sup>

The evening of each performance ended invariably with a speech by Aimé Bogaerts himself. He would tell the history of the Ghent syndicates and co-operatives (especially of *Vooruit*, the *Volkskinderen*’s source of finance) and emphasised in particular, by focusing on the “collective”, how the Ghent workers’ movement was growing to become a mass movement.<sup>20</sup> He considered Ghent as “the teacher of all of France” and encouraged the foreign cities to take comparable initiatives.<sup>21</sup> His call derived from a very clear belief in the progress of society. A new, powerful society had to be built. “We have to see to it that, behind us, a younger line stands ready, more intelligent, better informed, cleverer, stronger, more militant than we are. We have to have successors in whom socialism has grown, as it were, along with their muscles.”<sup>22</sup> Bogaerts also hammered on about the importance of the formation of groups of children and routinely referred to cities like Angers, Rouen and Sotteville, which had already followed the example of the Gentse Volkskinderen. When the *Volkskinderen* were received in the city hall of Paris in 1905, it was said that “Great Paris still lacks what socialist Ghent has been able to bring about with so much knowledge and dedication, their organised youth”.<sup>23</sup> Bogaerts sprinkled his speeches with emotional pleas, which earned him the nickname “the weepy face” among his opponents. During his speech when the *Volkskinderen* arrived home in 1902, Bogaerts said: “Friends, our enemies call me ‘the weepy face’, but when I see such scenes, then I cry from happiness.”<sup>24</sup> The performances and the accompanying speeches generally lasted until late in the evening, or better, in the night. Bogaerts regularly pointed to the fatigue of the children because of the late time at which they went to bed. This

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16. Elvire De Baets Archives, AMSAB.

17. *Vooruit*, 9 August 1904.

18. *Ibid.*, 24 August 1904.

19. *Ibid.*, 18 August 1905.

20. *Le Journal de Caen*, 1905.

21. *Vooruit*, 18 November 1903.

22. *Ibid.*, 6 September 1901.

23. *Ibid.*, 5 September 1905.

24. *Ibid.*, 27 August 1902.

was certainly contrary to rule number three of his “Recommendations to the adoptive parents”, which stated: “Do not let the children stay up too late. A good night’s rest is absolutely essential at a young age. But when one is making good propaganda, tiredness shouldn’t count,” said Bogaerts.<sup>25</sup>

It is important to notice how Bogaerts’ initiative has inspired other Belgian municipalities and cities like Jette and Leuven to build up their own *Volkskinderen* movement. However, one of the most remarkable followers of Bogaerts was abroad. “Les enfants du peuple” of Saint Claude, France, was initiated very shortly after a visit of the Gentse Volkskinderen in 1902.

### → The Ghent working-class child as a “child at risk” – the importance of holistic education

As already indicated in the introduction, we want to analyse the Ghent working-class child against the background of the “the child at risk”. Two elements are important here: (1) the protection of the child against an education that was too clerical and (2) the protection of the child against too much interference of the state in the lives of children and youth. The child that was central in Bogaerts’ thinking was the child as a social being that accepted his or her responsibility for the collective. One consequence of this was the great emphasis Bogaerts placed on the importance of peace education. The state with its military apparatus was the opposite of the peaceful “bohemian life” that Bogaerts had in mind with the travelling colony.<sup>26</sup> He had quite progressive ideas on the relational level and argued for communes and collectives. His aversion to the military and the police recurs repeatedly in his reports. When the children, on their journeys through Belgium, passed by an army camp he would call “No more weapons, citizen! May peace fertilise the furrows!” “At the gates of the camp, the cannons storm out and our children watch the sad engines curiously. No more weapons, citizen!, they sing again and one of us calls loudly: ‘There they go to learn to murder, we, children, are going to learn to live’.”<sup>27</sup> Or when, during the tour through France in 1903 they climbed Belin (a 600-metre-high hill that the French had fortified in 1870), he wrote: “When one sees what gigantic works were carried out here and thinks of how many millions were wasted on now already abandoned forts, then one can form the right idea of human stupidity that still sees in war and militarism a necessary evil!”<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the church and religious education were also the subjects of sharp attacks. Bogaerts, at that time the chairman of the Ghent Socialistische Vrijdenkersbond, was one of the driving forces behind the propaganda for official education, conducting a campaign among the parents in order to have religious education banned from the city schools. Bogaerts stood by the rationalistic school, anti-dogmatic and anticlerical. He once expressed this very explicitly: “Laziness must be combated as well as the weakness of handing the poor children over to clericalism for a bread card or a bed sheet. Poverty is an evil beast, but the poisoning of the heart and the brains of children is an irreparable disaster.”<sup>29</sup> At other times, Bogaerts proceeded more subtly. In his “Reminiscences from my childhood: some anecdotes”, Jos Lamarcq,

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25. Ibid., 29 August 1905.

26. Ibid., 1 September 1899.

27. Ibid., 8 August 1900.

28. Ibid., 23 August 1903.

29. Ibid., 8 September 1900.

one of the former *Volkskinderen*, tells how the children on one of their trips met an old village pastor with a “shrivelled face”.<sup>30</sup> The children rejoiced already at “giving him a mocking reception”, but Bogaerts urged them to show respect for the old man. Bogaerts and the old village pastor had a brief conversation with each other after which he suggested that the pastor was almost converted by this encounter. “With tear-filled eyes and a quavering voice, he greeted these youth who went from city to city, from country to country, to proclaim the great idea of fraternity and peace in a world purified of all prejudice and dogma.”<sup>31</sup> This anti-Catholic and anti-religious stance was also one of the running threads through the initiatives of “Les enfants du peuple”. A couple of months after its establishment, all parents and their children were invited to attend a meeting of “moral emancipation”. These meetings were organised on Sunday morning, at the same time as the Catholics went to church. The meetings were considered as an alternative to the dogmatic discourse of the Catholic Church.

Both elements – anticlericalism and the striving for a restricted influence of the state on the children – were united in what Paul Robin (1837-1912) described as a “holistic education” (Smith 1983; Halens 1999; Grunder 2007). This “education or general instruction” rested in the first place on the idea of equality among men. Each person must be able to develop as fully as possible all of his/her physical and intellectual potential in order to contribute in this way to the society in which he/she lives. Second, Robin defended the position that all truth and justice questions should be investigated scientifically. He was convinced that, if vulgarised scientific insights were to be transmitted via education, the new social order would appear automatically. Robin would have taken the term “holistic instruction/education” from the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier. Fourier made use of concepts such as self-government, learning by doing, and the community as the counterbalance for the fragmented person. These elements can also be very clearly found in Bogaerts’ travelling colony. Bogaerts saw the colony not as a supplement to education, but described it rather in terms of a correction to everything that went wrong at school. “There, a mass of ideas are pumped into our children that have little in common with our principles, the constant extolling of a useless and expensive monarchy, the acquiescence in social conditions that we consider thoroughly bad, the adulation of laws and ordinances that we want to overthrow as rapidly as possible.”<sup>32</sup> In their place, Bogaerts substituted travelling, singing, walking and discussing. “Our travelling colony is the best proof that the child needs to see, to experience. Words and moral preaching avail little – nature, the cause, the action is a hundred-fold more powerful in education than writing in notebooks or the teaching in infant schools.”<sup>33</sup> Both Fourier and Robin saw in the collective of Guise a paragon of holistic education. It was described as an educational system whereby the children of the “associates” were received at a very young age by the collective. Therefore, it was hardly surprising that the collective of Guise became a classic destination during the travels of the *Volkskinderen* in France. In the 1890s, there must have been intense contact between Robin and Bogaerts. Thus, Bogaerts invited Robin to Ghent in 1893 to organise together an “international education session, a meeting that would result in the foundation of a never fully functioning ‘universal association for holistic education’.” In addition to Bogaerts and Robin,

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30. Jos Lamarq, “Herinneringen uit mijne kinderjaren. Eenige anekdoten”, p. XI, AMSAB.

31. *Ibid.*, p. XII.

32. *Vooruit*, 6 September 1901.

33. *Ibid.*, 21 September 1902.

Alexis Sluys, director of the normal school of Brussels, was among those on the executive committee. In 1900, too, Robin received an invitation from Bogaerts. The intention was to set up “a kind of anarchist family temple”, but this idea came to nothing. The previous year, Robin had accompanied the *Volkskinderen* for a few days on their 10-day journey through Belgium.<sup>34</sup>

### → Holistic education versus propaganda: a paradox

One of the crucial questions of this paper is: do we need to interpret the story of the Gentse Volkskinderen in terms of “children at risk” or in terms of “taking risks”? One could argue that both interpretations are defensible or indefensible, depending on one’s perspective on the child and his or her (future) place in society. Political relations at that time illustrate this idea very well. On the one hand, Catholics were picturing children who were going to public schools as little villains or as degenerated bourgeois, as “little pigs”. On the other hand, socialists considered children who visited Catholic schools as ignorant and passive. As a result, both groups regarded “the other child” as a “child at risk”. But in this sense, of course, every child is a child at risk.

Bogaerts’ commitment towards the Gentse Volkskinderen clearly illustrates his status as a paradoxical socialist. Several examples can exemplify this status. We have already pointed to Bogaerts’ frustration with the strong moralising character of the liberal workers’ associations. But when it comes to moralising children, Bogaerts learned a lot from his liberal counterparts. As he stressed the importance of becoming a good citizen, Bogaerts did not hesitate to immerse children within a moralising context. His poems and songs, for example, sometimes written under his pen name, Johan, were strongly characterised by the socialist message of peace and global fraternity, but at the same time they were built up around moralising hints and themes (see Bogaerts 1925). As a result of the carnival celebration party by the *Volkskinderen*, Bogaerts wrote: “By singing and playing theatre we have shown how carnival really can be celebrated. This is much better than hitting the streets, drinking, and roaring ambiguous songs. And again, the *canaille* set an example. Where else can we find such a moral uplifting?”<sup>35</sup>

Another illustration can be found in the photomontage Bogaerts received after the first trip abroad by the travelling colony. The pictures are surrounded by all different moralising quotes such as “Art ennobles the soul”, “A stout body, a strong mind”, “Laziness breeds evil”, and “Science uplifts man”. Bogaerts adopted a comparable attitude to religion. On the one hand, he presented himself as a militant freethinker, acting rather aggressively towards the Catholic Church. On the other hand, he admired the person of Jesus Christ, considering Jesus as a socialist because of his concerns about “the suffering human race”. Several times Bogaerts tried to convince the children not to play the tempting game of priest bashing, but he could not prohibit that; as a result of an unfriendly sexton, the children started singing the *Internationale* in the church.<sup>36</sup>

One of the most striking paradoxes can be found in Bogaerts’ position towards the relation between education/schooling and the role of the state. As editor-in-chief of the leading socialist newspaper, *Vooruit*, he went with his party and defended the

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34. Ibid., 31 August 1899.

35. *Vooruit*, 22 February 1901.

36. Jos Lamarcq, op. cit., AMSAB.

political programme, a symbiosis of social democratic and progressive liberal values (social mobility, respectability), referring to the classless society, collectivism and international solidarity. This programme was developed at the important meeting in Quaregnon (March 1894) and pointed to the importance of the building up by the state of a liberal, holistic and compulsory primary education. Not incidentally, the socialist teachers had played an important role in writing that programme. However, as a private individual and in his “leisure time” as an activist, Bogaerts, as we have shown, can be considered as part of the anarchistic movement, acting against too much state interference. This seems related to the double discourse of the so-called utopian socialists. Godin, who as a politician agreed with compulsory state education, but who realised at the same time the *familistère* in Guise, defended a similar viewpoint (Brémand 2008). A similar attitude towards the state can also be found in Robin’s orphanage in Cempuis. When the Catalan anarchistic educationalist Francisco Ferrer i Guàrdia was executed on 13 October 1909, in many European cities “left-wing anticlerical persons” organised protest campaigns (Smith 1983). In Ghent the *Volkskinderen* participated at such a protest meeting.<sup>37</sup> These protests played a crucial role in the transformation of Ferrer into an icon, an innocent victim of religious fanaticism and political conservatism (Ferrer i Guardia 2009). On this occasion, a clear tension could be noticed between the private and the public Bogaerts, being attracted by anarchistic thinking on the one hand and trying to be a loyal editor of the party’s newspaper on the other hand. At the protest meeting he addressed the crowd: “I have known Ferrer as an example of love and tenderness ..., he didn’t share our thoughts; however, he fought for the freedom of education and dedicated himself continuously to the development of the working class”.<sup>38</sup> Bogaerts’ speech was much more in favour of Ferrer than the one by Edward Anseele, the leading man of the Socialist Party in Ghent. According to Anseele, Ferrer longed for a communist society and it was “impossible to regard Ferrer as one of us”.<sup>39</sup> This illustrates the rather complicated relationship between Bogaerts and the Belgian Workers’ Party, which accepted the existing structure of public education, presenting itself as a caring institution for the working classes and not so much as a power that is built up out of the working classes. Looking for the influence of the Gentse *Volkskinderen* as an educational and a “utopian” socialist initiative, we need to consider that most of the children were “protected children”. Nearly all children were members of families that were connected to the Socialist Freethinkers Federation. Most of these freethinkers belonged to the more committed, “conscious” part of the Socialist Party. However, the group that strongly defended the freethinking alternative only formed a minority (Vanschoenbeek 1995) and, in 1913, the freethinkers’ organisations even became disaffiliated. Their anti-clericalism allegedly hindered electoral expansion in the Flemish countryside (Groessens 1998). An important consequence of this fact is that, once Aimé Bogaerts died, the Gentse *Volkskinderen* soon came to an end.

Can we describe the *Volkskinderen* as “taking risk children”? The *Volkskinderen* movement can be interpreted in terms of the soft side of socialism. They can be situated at the other side of that kind of socialism that combatively struggled against capitalism and heavily leant on the image of the worker as a striker and a demonstrator. Bogaerts preferred the image of the child that realises change in a more peaceful way. The way the Gentse *Volkskinderen* are portrayed reminds us of what Gary Cross described as the wondrous innocent child (Cross 2004). It is

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37. *Vooruit*, 13 October 1909.

38. *Ibid.*, 22 October 1909.

39. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1909.

the kind of child that provokes (strong) emotional reactions, but at the same time it is believed that it is the child that leads us to a new and better society. The child stands for a charming propaganda, making people smile and believe that realising a bright future starts with bright and social children.

The children appear as an important propaganda instrument, forced to adapt themselves to a daily regime that cannot be described as very “child-friendly”. Signs of resistance were nearly visible, although one of the “strongest” memories of one of the children, throwing French food through the window of their room because they really did not like the food, can be interpreted as a playful act of resistance. The children, most of them girls, were put into the socialist display window, evidence of a flourishing socialism. They were used for ideological purposes, withdrawn from Catholic influences, but just as much limited in their freedom.

Nevertheless, the Gentse Volkskinderen seemed sure of themselves and appeared as able-bodied children throughout the different letters and stories. They kept writing letters to the people they met during their trips, creating a network of soulmates. This sometimes resulted in long-distance love affairs, which petered out after a couple of letters. The children were builders of the future, preparing a new world as described by Edward Bellamy (Olson 2008) in his utopian novel, *Looking backward 2000-1887*, a book that was very popular among Belgian socialist teachers. These children would educate their offspring in the right ideology and already had a good influence on their parents. Or, just like Doctor Leete in *Looking backward* proclaims: “There is no task so unselfish, so necessarily without return, though the heart is well rewarded, as the nurture of the children who are to make the world for one another when we are gone” (Bellamy 1888, p. 262).

In the end, Bogaerts’ educational project cannot be considered as a libertarian project as such. Several aspects bear witness to the anarchistic influence: freedom as an educational goal, the importance of educational and cultural action (not violent action), the focus on holistic education, and co-education. However, once a more rational and scientific perspective came about, this anarchism faded. It was easier to reject the Church’s dogmas than to decline state interference as an instrument in creating social inequality and injustice. Libertarian-anarchistic and related initiatives are characterised by diversity. As Hans-Ulrich Grunder puts it: “Ein Rezeptionsgeschichte libertair-pädagogischer Versuche innerhalb der bürgerlichen Pädagogik des 20. Jahrhunderts fehlt bislang” (Grunder 2007, p. 83).

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*Martine Vermandere*

## **Youth holiday camps at the Belgian seaside, 1887-1980**

### **→ Introduction**

**W**hat does “holiday camp” mean? It is a concept which consists of two seemingly contradictory words. Sources reveal that several terms are used indiscriminately alongside the concept of “holiday camps” (for example, open-air cures, school villas, holiday centres for children, etc.). Terms differ according to the period and the country (in England the term “camp” is common: “holiday camps”, “summer camps”, “children’s camps”, etc., while in Germany and France the term “colonies” is used: “Ferienkolonien” and “colonies de vacances” respectively).

The most operational definition, at least for the initial period, appears in the Parisian Société pour la Propagation et l’Encouragement des Colonies de Vacances in 1887: “Holiday camps are preventive health care institutions for the benefit of weak children in elementary schools, particularly the poorest among the weakest. No sick children are allowed in them. These camps are not a reward for good behaviour. The aim is to offer children a fresh air cure in the countryside, involving physical exercise, cleanliness, good nutrition and cheerfulness.”

Holiday camps were a widespread phenomenon until the 1980s. They came

into existence in Switzerland. Father Brion from Zurich is generally considered to be the founder of holiday camps, although this claim has aroused some controversy lately. The fact is that similar initiatives were launched in German cities around that time, and that English philanthropists raised funds – Fresh Air Funds – so that poor children from London's East End could benefit from country air. The first camps in France were organised in 1881. The Paris City Council had already started subsidising them in 1887. Holiday camps were also organised in the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, the Russian Federation and even in America at the end of the 19th century.

## → Industrialisation and the hygiene movement

Industrialisation had resulted in densely populated areas, thereby increasing the risk of being infected by diseases. The authorities were particularly concerned about the spread of tuberculosis, as around 1850 this illness accounted for 20% to 25% of all deaths due to natural causes. The economic consequences were disastrous. A healthy workforce was a productive workforce. Healthy children therefore offered the best guarantee of a productive adult population and social rest.

The hygiene movement had received a positive response in Belgium around 1840. It brought together many specialists from different disciplines at international conferences and contributed to better medical and hygienic conditions, ensuring that doctors enjoyed a high social status. Statistics were introduced as a new method in social sciences. They revealed, among other things, that child mortality was significantly higher in cities. Edouard Ducpétiaux, a Brussels councillor, was one of the first researchers to apply the statistical method. He emphasised the importance of public education: ignorance concerning hygiene had to be eliminated by distributing publications containing instructions and by teaching at school. Furthermore, holiday camps had to be established to teach children the principles of personal hygiene, so that they in turn would urge their parents to behave in a cleaner and more civilised way. Hygienists pointed to certain individual customs and habits endangering one's health, particularly after the discovery of bacteria in the 1880s. Lack of hygiene was associated with inferiority and indecency. A dirty girl was an alleged retarded and immoral girl. Just like their Catholic rivals, they projected the image of a morally inferior worker, conforming to the values and norms of bourgeois society, by adopting moral principles and disciplining himself or herself.

The phenomenon of holiday camps is part of this process of inducing discipline and promoting hygiene. Sunlight and fresh air were an effective remedy against bacteria and diseases, according to the hygienists. It is for that reason that children suffering from tuberculosis were sent to seaside hospitals. They were established in Europe with gifts from philanthropists from 1860 onwards.

Holiday camps were also financed to a great extent by public charity until 1914. The necessary funds were raised via gifts, feasts, tombolas and collections, although sometimes camps had already got a financial boost from local authorities. They provided transport for weak children – not sick ones – to the seaside.

The Brussels doctor and local councillor Florimond Kops was the first person to organise a camp in Belgium in 1886. He succeeded in sending 30 boys and 30 girls to the countryside, led by state school teachers, subsidised by the City of Brussels, and supported by Charles Buls, the Mayor of Brussels and the founder of the Ligue de l'enseignement (Education League). Liberal freethinkers had founded the Ligue in 1864, claiming that education was the solution to social

problems. The Ligue became one of the main champions of compulsory elementary education and state schools. It said: "But let us not waste time. We should intervene in childhood; children are docile in early life and have a constitution which may be radically transformed".<sup>40</sup>

### → The fight for the child

No compulsory education existed in Belgium until 1914. Imitating foreign initiatives, the Ligue had been trying to establish a holiday camp at the seaside since 1878.

However, holiday camps made a real start after a child labour law was passed on 13 December 1889. Children were better protected against industrial labour from then on, as they were no longer allowed to work under the age of 12 and for more than 12 hours a day. Although compulsory education had not yet been introduced, more children could go to primary school, as a result of which a new problem arose: children were not taken care of during the holidays. We read in a leaflet dating back to that time: "What to do with these little toddlers, playing in alleys, unattended. They gather into groups, hang around parks, turning into petty criminals."<sup>41</sup>

Two Brussels liberal philanthropic foundations, established during the school funding controversy, took the lead: the Association des Marçunvins and the Cercle Le Progrès.

The school funding controversy had begun in 1879, when Pierre Van Humbeeck, the liberal education minister, introduced a law forbidding local authorities to subsidise Catholic elementary schools. The Catholics reacted furiously and the liberals were defeated at the 1884 election. The former were to govern continuously until 1914. A large proportion of children attended Catholic schools. The liberals then established a series of paternalist charities in big cities, providing poor children with soup and clothes in order to seduce them to attend state schools. Holiday camps served the same purpose. They were organised by liberal charities, such as the Association des Marçunvins and the Cercle Le Progrès, which were collecting money in order to support lay teachers and distribute clothes in state schools. Benjamin Crombez (1832-1902), a liberal large landowner and a Maecenas, put a little school at the disposal of the City of Brussels in Nieuwpoort-Bad in 1887. From then on, more than a hundred destitute Brussels children attending state schools spent a fortnight each year in this *Palais de l'Enfance*. These camps were operated by the Cercle Le Progrès and the Association des Marçunvins sent children to them. The latter stopped doing so in 1902, when it had its own villa at the seaside.

### → A day in the country

Cercle Le Progrès also organised *promenades hygiéniques* (hygienic walks) in the surroundings of Brussels (Ter Kamerenbos, Zoniënwood), as not all children could be sent to holiday camps. These walks were subsidised by the City of Brussels. Children were allowed to take soup, meat, vegetables and bread with them on

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40. *Bulletin de la Ligue de l'Enseignement*. Assemblée générale de la Ligue 1879-1980, Brussels.

41. A free translation of a quotation from "La bienfaisance en Belgique: Le Grand Air pour les Petits", in *L'auxiliaire mutuel dans la famille*, n.d. (cutting found at the Public Record Office, Brussels, Archives Ernest Gossart, Number 28).

returning home. They came from a school in a popular Brussels neighbourhood. The poorest of them were selected, after consulting with the teachers who were to attend to them. The latter had to report extensively after each walk, so as to verify if these little excursions exerted any “moral influence” on the children.

Jules Carlier, an industrial entrepreneur and a Mons liberal politician, founded the Oeuvre du grand Air pour les Petits in 1896. Unlike the Association des Marçunvins and Cercle Le Progrès, the Oeuvre du grand Air also sent children to rural families, following the English model of “A day in the country”. This foundation also operated a camp, in a villa, at the seaside, in Wenduine. It distinguished itself from the existing foundations operating school camps, by strictly adhering to the principles of independence and neutrality. The board included Catholics, liberals and one socialist. As early as August 1896, the Association des Marçunvins and Cercle Le Progrès protested against the placement of children with rural families, because they were not properly supervised, morals were questionable, and control of food quantities and quality, medical care and child labour was largely inexistent. Moreover, the Association des Marçunvins and Cercle Le Progrès argued that community life had a positive influence on children.

Nevertheless, the Oeuvre du grand Air persisted in defending placement with rural families. It argued that the environment was less school-like and that the children were educated by a mother and a father. The main reason for placement of children with families was, however, financial: it was the cheaper option. For example, there were zero building maintenance costs.

### → Public and private

At the end of the 19th century, in 1898, a socialist initiative to place children with families was launched: *De Volkskinderen* (working-class children, Vanobbergen and Simon in this volume). The socialist school teacher Aimé Bogaerts organised a big trip each year, for example to the French Jura, lodging the children with socialist families. The children staged a show every evening, involving acrobatics and theatre, thereby advancing the cause of socialism. At that time, the socialists were still a small minority and therefore formed a cartel with the progressive liberals from the 1884 local elections onwards. They did not approve of holiday camps being operated by private charities; it was a matter that had to be dealt with by public authorities.

However, private charities also increasingly asked for subsidies from local authorities, particularly for the transport of children to the camps. Around 20 000 Belgian children stayed in a holiday camp for 10 days in 1905.

In order to receive public subsidies it was argued, among other things, that charity contributed to the industrial and commercial future of our country, namely by raising “generations of robust and healthy children”. Happy and healthy children were perceived as offering the best guarantee of a productive adult population.

Not surprisingly, a lot of industrial entrepreneurs sat on the board of these charities, along with doctors and dignitaries. Donations were mainly made by them, gifts in kind included.

Holiday camps were launched in cities, particularly liberal ones. Local authorities and philanthropic foundations called for teachers to attend to the children in the camps. Teachers’ unions supported these calls, by emphasising the benefits of holiday camps.

The Catholics followed in the footsteps of the liberals. They too started operating camps within the framework of Catholic charities. In Ghent the *Colonies scolaires catholiques de Gand* sent 10-12-year-old children from Catholic schools to the seaside for eight days from 1902 onwards. In Antwerp too, children had to be poor and weak to be selected for the Catholic school camp, but in addition to that they had to attend Catholic schools and should have received their First Communion. As in the case of non-Catholic camps, children first had to pass a medical examination. However, such an examination did not exist in all schools, as it was not obligatory until 1914. The charities usually arranged for it themselves. The First World War gave a boost to the camps.

### → A national agency for child welfare

Within the framework of the Nationaal Hulp- en Voedingscomité (relief agency), a special department had been established, Hulp en Bescherming aan de Werken voor Kinderwelzijn (child welfare) in 1915. As this department had performed quite well, the Nationaal Werk voor Kinderwelzijn (NWK, child welfare agency) was founded in 1919. The number of victims of tuberculosis had risen again due to the poor living conditions during the war. The NWK started granting subsidies and became a supervising body, introducing regulations concerning nutrition, hygiene, safety, etc. Camps had to comply with these regulations. In order to qualify for NWK subsidies, organisations had to submit a request and comply with NWK inspections every year.

The NWK itself also organised fresh air cures for poor children between 3 and 14 years old on a trimestrial basis. They served as model camps. A very strict timetable was set, while the emphasis was on open-air activities, good nutrition and physical exercise. A strong medical approach was taken, focusing on the child's medical condition and his or her physical strength. Success was measured by the number of kilos children had gained.

Visual education was also part of the programme in order to prevent children from falling behind at school (compulsory education had been introduced in 1914). In summer, when the weather was fine, teaching took place in the open air. The principles of hygiene and care were also imparted to the children, hoping that their parents would adopt them too, having seen that their children's health had improved. Children were provided with cards containing guidelines on returning home.

Parents were not allowed to visit their child more than once, on the occasion of a collective visitors' day. Brothers and sisters under the age of 16 were denied entry to the camp, because of potential contagion risks.

### → Health insurance funds

From the 1920s onwards health insurance funds also launched holiday camps for children. This was due to the fact that only funds providing insurance for families were publicly subsidised (compulsory health insurance was inexistent at that time (1920), but officially recognised funds did receive subsidies). Funds providing insurance for women were no longer subsidised and consequently disappeared. Women then started developing gender-specific services, such as infant welfare and holiday camps, within the framework of funds for families.

As these services were used as propaganda tools by the health insurance funds, competition arose between women's organisations, particularly the Nationaal Verbond der Christelijke Vrouwengilden (Catholic) and the Socialistische Vooruitziende

Vrouwen (SVV, socialist). Initially, much of the work in these camps was done by volunteers, that is, mostly by members of the board in socialist camps; by sisters of different monastic orders in Catholic camps.

Activities were loosely organised and agreed upon the evening before by the camp leaders. Children were not strictly classified into age groups. The daily routine in all camps was practically the same.

A fundamental difference between socialist and Catholic holiday camps concerned co-education. Pope Pius XI had condemned co-education in 1934.

## → Professionalisation

The Second World War gave a new boost to the camps. The Winterhulp (winter aid) agency was established in 1940 to centralise aid in Belgium, and subsidised camps for weak children. The NWK too continued to support camps. The latter were also an ideal hiding place for Jewish children during the war. They were given false names and placed with the other children. Thousands of them could be saved in this way.

Holiday camps remained necessary after the Second World War. Parliament had passed the paid holiday law in 1936, entitling every worker to at least six paid holidays a year. However, a stay at the seaside or in the Ardennes was not feasible for young and large working-class families for a long time. As late as 1956, 68% of all respondents to a questionnaire said they lacked the means to go on holiday

After the war, holiday camps adopted more professional standards. King Leopold III had taken the initiative to establish the Aide aux Enfants des Prisonniers de guerre – Steun aan Kinderen van Krijgsgevangenen (AEP-SKK) in 1941, a relief agency for children of prisoners of war. The AEP served the purpose of easing the suffering of soldiers' children, bettering their health and replacing the missing fathers.

The AEP was transformed into a non-profit organisation after the war and its number of clients rose steadily. At the beginning of the 1970s, the AEP took care of the children of the employees of about 70 companies, including the National Bank, de Generale Bankmaatschappij (leading Belgian bank), many department stores, the national airline, Sabena, and the national railway. The AEP had already changed its name into Aide aux Enfants du Pays in 1948, because it expanded rapidly.

Providing training to camp leaders was one of the main concerns of the AEP. The AEP played a pioneering role in this field: it shared its pedagogical know-how with many organisations. Courses were experience-oriented; training courses for senior staff members later also included methods of active education, social psychology and the research results of AEP psychologists.

Compulsory health insurance for manual and non-manual employees was introduced on 21 March 1945. Moreover, from January 1946 onwards, health insurance funds earmarked a special contribution covering the costs of preventive open-air cures, following a measure imposed by the socialist minister of labour and social affairs, Léon-Éli Troclet. The government provided extra subsidies, as a result of which the health insurance funds became the main organisers of holiday camps. The latter were closely linked to different ideological pillars.

Nevertheless, the NWK kept subsidising camps and increasingly drew up guidelines with which camps had to comply in order to receive subsidies. Health

insurance funds therefore were obliged to adopt more professional standards. The Socialistische Vooruitziende Vrouwen founded a non-profit organisation, Zonnige Uren (sunny hours), in order to provide optimum conditions for operating camps in the 1950s. Zonnige Uren took care of the menus and the daily camp activities, training courses for camp leaders, classification into age groups, procurement of equipment, etc.

The Christian health insurance funds had a bit of a slow start with respect to holiday camps. Preventive Air Cures did not get going before the end of the 1940s. Jan Van Roy was the driving force behind it, as he had gained a lot of experience in the Scout movement. He was in charge of Preventive Air Cures until he retired in 1981. Training courses for camp leaders in particular bore his stamp, as he had written his first handbook in 1949.

Only small children were sent to the seaside by Preventive Air Cures in the 1950s. Because of "the moral atmosphere" in the Belgian seaside resorts, 14-year-old boys and girls were sent to Switzerland.

Preference was given to resorts which were able to accommodate lots of children, because this facilitated supervision by Preventive Air Cures or the health insurance funds. Hotel Excelsior, in Blankenberge, was one of them. It accommodated up to 700 children. Seminarians and young priests served as chaplains and sometimes also as camp leaders during the first years.

Working-class children would get to know and learn to appreciate priests in this way, in response to the rising tide of secularisation. Preventive Air Cures also recruited camp leaders from the Catholic workers youth movement (Katholieke Arbeidersjeugdbeweging).

Handbooks no longer included a fully elaborated programme when holiday camps almost ceased to exist. Instead, there was a survey of the various activities on offer, such as games, manual labour, storytelling, acting, singing, campfires, folk dance, gymnastics and exploration of nature.

In both Catholic and socialist camps, leaders were mainly students, mostly from teacher training colleges. The number of children attending holiday camps fluctuated until 1976. Afterwards the trend was definitely downward.

Subsidies for preventive air cures were abolished by the Belgian authorities in 1980. There was also a growing dislike of the uniform approach to these camps and the massive number of children attending them. Large-scale holiday camps ceased to exist forever.

## → Conclusion

Holiday camps were launched as charity initiatives to prevent weak children from developing tuberculosis. From 1886 onwards they came into existence in Belgian cities where industrialisation had been going on for some considerable time and the bourgeoisie was struggling to get a grip on the deterioration in living conditions and the ensuing social unrest.

Middle-class children also started to attend holiday camps after the Second World War. On the one hand, tuberculosis had become rare, as a result of which there was a shift of emphasis from health to pedagogy, as was the case with the AEP



camps. On the other hand, the camps adopted more professional standards and norms, as from then on public subsidies were also offered within the framework of supplementary health insurance. Since membership of health insurance funds had become obligatory, working-class children were no longer the only ones to be serviced. The funds succeeded in reaching out to a new audience. In France, publicly funded elementary schools had managed to do the same, as the holiday camps became part of after-school activities.

Despite efforts to provide better training for camp leaders, pedagogy did not play a prominent part in holiday camps. This was not fundamentally altered by the arrival of the welfare state. As late as the 1970s charts showing children's weight gain were published to illustrate how successful holiday camps were. Greater emphasis was put on sociability – against the rising tide of individualisation – and, as psychologists gained influence, more attention was paid to the different child development stages. However, Catholic funds had great difficulty in renouncing the Scouts method which had been introduced by its founder, Jan Van Roy. Some of the main socialist camp leaders made efforts to stimulate a more autonomous and emancipatory behaviour of camp participants in the aftermath of 1968, but at the end of the day not the children but the leaders usually dictated the rhythm of camp life. Taking some pedagogical action was not possible in many camps, because it was not feasible to form small groups for lack of camp leaders. And, above all, the majority of camps depended on the subsidies of the NWK, which was mainly concerned with health care and imposing increasingly stricter norms. Experiments and new initiatives could only be launched if the organisers did not depend on NWK subsidies.

Moreover, the main organisers, who were also subsidised by the NWK, were the health insurance funds. They too argued that holiday camps were part of preventive health care, as a result of which they continued to be medical-hygienic projects throughout their existence. However, it is doubtful whether preventive air cures in the last decades of their existence were still necessary for the target audience. Not surprisingly, a new legitimacy was sought for them in this period.

Furthermore, lots of new leisure activities were on offer for young people. Parents also preferred play areas for children close to home. The idea that children needed individual attention took root as a result of growing prosperity and the fact that families were getting smaller. The concept of “holiday” had always been at odds with the concept of “camp”; however, not so much the abolition of subsidies but, probably, the growing dislike for the uniform approach to the camps and the massive number of children attending them really finished them off.

NWK camps were gradually transformed into centres for children who were suddenly or occasionally running into problems and whose parents were temporarily unable to function as mothers and fathers. The other organisers stopped operating camps or turned to other activities, such as family holidays and seaside classes, or they downsized their activities at home or abroad. Children and young people are now attending language camps, sports camps and thematic camps. Camps are usually organised in smaller centres and targeted at a limited and specific audience. They take an inclusive approach, which means that special attention is paid to underprivileged groups.

While for almost a 100 years gaining weight was the main motive to establish holiday camps, health holidays for children suffering from overweight and obesity are nowadays organised to lose weight.

*Juha Nieminen*

## **A Finnish perspective: features of the history of modern youth work and youth organisations**

The aim of the article is to give a summary of the development of youth work in Finland, in particular from the youth organisations' standpoint. It covers modern times from the birth of youth work to the end of the 20th century. The last two decades are excluded because they are distinctively characterised by the features of late modernity and they belong more to the area of contemporary analysis than historical research. This kind of comprehensive review does not allow attention to be given to all youth organisations in detail, but it makes possible a description of, and reflection on, some key features of youth work and youth organisations. The article is the result of my long-standing interest in historical and pedagogical research dealing with youth work (for example, Nieminen 1995, 1997).

### **→ Modern youth as a background of modern youth work**

The aims and forms of youth work are always connected with the content of youth as a phase of life in specific historical situations. So, modern youth was a precondition for modern youth work. Modern youth was a social product of the modern era defined by certain power and production systems. The turning

points in the power systems were the Enlightenment and the national revolutions of the 18th century. The turning points in systems of production were industrialisation, the technical revolution and urbanisation in the 19th century. Democracy, nation states, new modes of production and class society characterised modern times in the western world. The spirit of modernity gave people an idea of the future and development, and it also gave a special value to youth (see, for example, Gillis 1981, 1993; Hornstein 1966; Mitterauer 1986).

Youth's rights to self-determination and social participation changed during the modern era. The patriarchal order of ancient and medieval times gave way to modern citizenship connected with a nation state. Family, immediate communities and church did not determine the rights and status of young people alone; the modern state and political systems also defined the place of young people in society. Youth became a preparatory phase before full citizenship. On the other hand, during the modern era, young people detached themselves increasingly from the world of work. The systems of production changed from agriculture and economic self-sufficiency to industry, mass production and the market economy. No longer part of the production system, the modern nuclear family concentrated on caring and education. At the same time, the differentiation of production contributed to the development of a multidimensional schooling system. Youth became a "waiting room" for economic independence.

In the modern era, the status of future citizens and sustained economic dependency were also characteristic of youth in Finland. Youth became more clearly differentiated from childhood and adulthood than before, and youth also became more universal. Despite this new universality, the content and the meaning of youth still varied with social factors, such as social class, living area, gender and ethnicity.

### → The traditions of Finnish youth work

A lot of youth organisations were established at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries in Finland. The early phase and some of the later developments of Finnish youth work can be interpreted with the help of traditions. By traditions I mean, following Mark Smith (1988, pp. 48-64), certain patterns and customs of thinking and practice, which have existed over time. These patterns are handed down to new generations of young people and youth workers through action and oral as well as written traditions, even in changing social situations. Although youth work is often experienced as constantly changing, under this seeming movement there are powerful continuities. Traditions represent continuity in youth work.

I have identified four traditions in the early history of Finnish youth work: the Christian tradition, the national-idealistic tradition, the political-corporative tradition and the hobby-based tradition of youth work. These traditions were shaped mainly by youth organisations.

The practices of the Christian tradition of youth work began to take shape at the beginning of the modern era. During these times, Finland was part of Sweden until 1809 (see Jutikkala and Pirinen 1996). The confirmation class was first part of Finnish popular education and later became the heart of Lutheran youth work. In the 18th century, the established church gave its first recommendations for the confirmation class. The aim of the Lutheran Church was to control the bad habits of young people and to protect them against pietistic separatism. Confirmation classes also became a social constraint: it was obligatory for Christian marriage. Professional priests arranged the confirmation classes, but in the Sunday school

movement laymen had an important role. In Finland, temporary Sunday schools were arranged as early as the end of the 18th century, but in the 19th century the established Lutheran Church adopted Sunday schools as a method against Free Churchism.

Early Christian youth work was first characterised by a tension between denominational Lutheran and a more general Christian approach, on the one hand, and by the opposition of the centrally led state church and Christian youth organisations, on the other. The first voluntary Christian youth associations were founded in the 1880s. The influence of the worldwide YMCA movement reached Finland and the local YMCA (founded 1889) became a leading Christian youth movement. First, the established Lutheran Church saw voluntary youth associations as a threat to religious unity. Voluntary Christian youth associations were seen as competitors to the home and the parishes of the established church. Gradually, the development of modern civil society legitimised religious youth organisations. Besides Anglo-American youth organisations, there was also a successful League of Christian Youth Associations that was based on pure Lutheran creed.

After the Finnish Lutheran Church lost its hegemony in popular education to the state and communities at the beginning of the 20th century, youth work became a special method of Christian education. Over the years, the Christian tradition of youth work changed its concept of a young person from that of “humble” to “Christian citizen”. Christian youth organisations provided many new leisure activities to reach young people, and their aim was to strengthen the community through religious ideology.

Finland was an autonomous grand duchy of the Russian Empire from 1809 to 1917. The Finnish national liberation movement gained strength throughout the 19th century, and the national-idealistic tradition of youth work began to take shape at the turn of the century. The aim of the leading nationalist ideology, “Fennomania”, was to strengthen the national spirit and entity through enlightenment and the Finnish language.

The national-idealistic tradition of youth work was part of the Finnish national movement. The student movement played an important role in national liberation. At the beginning of the 19th century the student movement adopted a calm and idealistic attitude towards the development of Finland. Young students found the roots of Finland: a fatherland with a picturesque landscape. Students promulgated a national spirit among common people and the leading Fennomans saw youth as the “hope of the future”, because they thought the older generation was already corrupted. The youth education of the temperance movement and the Finnish Youth Association were proponents of this tradition. The Finnish Youth Association – which still exists – was a successful movement of rural youth. The first local association was founded in 1881, and the aim of it was “to promote the education of young people through plays, writings, libraries and dances”. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, there were 17 000 members in the movement. The network of nationally oriented youth associations linked local communities to regional and national centres. The Finnish Youth Association defined the self-education of youth as one of its highest ideals, and the aim of the organisation was to reform society through education and enlightenment.

It is noteworthy to state that two originally Anglo-American movements – the Scouts and the 4-H (Young Farmers) – adopted strong national characteristics when they arrived in Finland at the beginning of the 20th century. The members of Boy

Scouts, Girl Guides and 4-H were younger than the members of the student movement and the Finnish Youth Association. Scouts and Guides were active in cities, 4-H in the countryside.

The stable society of the estates was breaking down at the end of the 19th century and universal suffrage was passed in 1906 in Finland. The development of society was not seen only as a matter of providence or national spirit, it was also a question of political power and corporative influence. At the turn of the century in Finland, there were several different groups which had different intentions in society and social participation became a sign of a developed democratic state.

The Finnish student movement became more radical at the end of the 19th century and the political-corporative tradition of youth work was born at the turn of the century. After the general strike of 1905, youth labour became active and the first explicitly political youth organisation, the Social Democratic Youth Federation, was founded in 1906. The Social Democratic Youth Federation saw socialistic enlightenment as a useful means of youth work, it showed that class division had also reached the young age groups and the class struggle was an important part of its programme. Generally, youth organisations had a more important role in the labour movement than in conservative or centre parties. Later, youth adopted a notable role in developing the Finnish trade union movement, too. In this political-corporative tradition, young people constituted a pressure group and they were united around a political idea or field of study.

The hobby-based tradition of youth work grew out of growing political awareness, the deepening class struggle, the bloody civil war of 1918 and the ruins of the League of the School Youth. Some adult authorities saw youth as an unsuitable battleground for political or societal intentions, and they wanted to channel the energy of school youth into politically harmless activities.

The League of Young Power was founded in the 1920s and its purpose was to promote young people's interests, abilities, skills and cultural activities. Organisationally, the league was divided into different hobby "circles" or clubs, which had their own guidance and commentary systems. There were separate clubs for, for example, technical interests, chemistry, composition, literature, acting, bee-keeping, nature, sports, photography, stamp collecting and so on. Later, many of these circles or clubs separated from the League of Young Power and formed their own national organisations; some of them still exist. The work of the league had a considerable impact on positive attitudes to the individual interests of youth. Clubs for poetry and literature remained in the league and they have been a visible part of the cultural activities of Finnish young people for decades. Even the aim of hobbies was to replace political activity by personal interests; many hobbies carried social intentions, not least poetry and literature.

There are notable differences between these traditions in Finnish youth work. The main aim of youth work in the Christian tradition was to encourage young people to adopt a Christian outlook on life. In this tradition the development of society is interpreted as providence. The aim of youth work in the national-idealistic tradition was to encourage young people in self-education. The progress of the nation and the state can be achieved through the help of enlightenment and education. According to the political-corporative tradition, the aim of youth work was to make young people socially and politically consciousness. The development of society is seen as a matter of power and political participation. Instead of that, the hobby-based tradition saw individual interest as a way to harmonic virtue. However, youth

organisations in each of these traditions arranged similar leisure time activities to reach young people. Depending on the background of the organisation, they also contributed to the development of community: the religious spirit of the community, bonds of national togetherness, social and political consciousness, and the personal virtues of Finnish citizens.

### → **Common interpretations of youth work in the inter-war period**

The traditions of Finnish youth work were shaped by youth organisations; there was neither central state nor municipal administration of youth work before the 1940s. In spite of that, there were some common interpretations of youth work supported by the authorities between the world wars. These public interpretations were focused on three issues: the distribution of welfare, unifying culture and educating citizens.

Finland became independent in 1917 and in 1918 there was a bloody civil war between the right-wing (the Whites) and people from and close to the labour movement (the Reds). The war resulted in a deep chasm between the winners (Whites) and the losers (Reds), which was also reflected in youth work. After the Civil War, Finnish youth work took part in the distribution of welfare. The great amount of orphans, the class distinctions and the bad living conditions in growing industrial cities led to child and youth welfare practices. It was a question of clothes, food, housing, health and guardianship. In these conditions, young people were often seen as potential loafers and criminals, and this interpretation led to social work and youth protection practices. There was a great debate about the legislation on child and youth welfare, and the Child Welfare Law was finally passed in 1936. But the law ignored voluntary and preventive youth work done by youth organisations. However, the Ministry of Social Affairs used to give subsidies, for example, to youth clubs of the YMCA, the Settlement movement and the Christian parishes.

The question of national culture was also important in the divided nation. Education was made compulsory in 1921, and the elementary school became a main agency in strengthening the basic values among the rising generation. Youth work also played an active role in the unification of Finnish national culture. The emphasis of Christian youth work moved slowly from voluntary Christian youth organisations to the established Finnish Lutheran Church. Little by little, the voluntary Christian youth organisations drew closer to the church, and the participation of Lutheran priests in youth organisations was a decisive point in their activities. After Finland had separated from the Russian Empire and the Swedish language had lost its position, the “language question” was decided. Generally, organisations of Finnish-speaking youth were dominant and the movements of Swedish-speaking youth became a means to support the national minority. In the name of guaranteeing the unity and existence of the nation, the young republic resorted to forms of extreme power in preventing the communist youth movement.

National defence was seen as a problem for the small, new nation. During the inter-war period youth work gained recognition by offering practical solutions to a “boy problem”, including the defence of a country. Finland saw extensive growth in boys’ clubs, boys’ sports and outdoor games. Furthermore, girls’ organisations trained girls in housework, caring and nursing. The aim of these activities was to infuse into the young people a common patriotism and a will to defend their country. Unfortunately, fears of war were confirmed in 1939, when the so-called “Winter War” against the Soviet Union broke out.

During the 1920s and 1930s certain leaders of youth organisations criticised schools, because they thought that they were dominated too much by knowledge and competition instead of character building and citizenship. On the contrary, youth work done by the youth organisations was seen to accustom young people to Finnish citizenship: young people were defined as future citizens, and this view led to civic education and character-building activities. According to the view of the dominant culture, politics was not suitable for minors and young people were expected to arrive at political opinions only on reaching majority. In the labour youth movement, there was a more positive attitude to the political activity of youth. However, the activities of non-political youth work were seen as a useful means of civic education. It was important to train the young to accept the authorities and the particular form of government. The aim of Finnish youth work was to educate the young to take their places in the new nation state.

### → Youth work in the society of reconstruction

In 1944 Finland broke away from the Second World War. Starting up the peacetime economy, the resettlement of Karelians, and rearranging both the internal and foreign policy were challenges for a nation. At the end of the 1940s there was a tense atmosphere in Finland, although the 1950s were more stable though culturally conservative. The baby boom after the war revolutionised the demographical structure of the Finnish population. Caring for, schooling and employing this generation were to be dominant social policy issues throughout the latter part of the century.

After the Second World War, Finland used youth work as a means of reconstruction, including calming down the restlessness of youth, developing co-operation among different social circles and establishing new kinds of relationships with the Soviet Union (see also Nieminen 1998). During the 1940s and 1950s, youth work became a part of public administration in the field of the Ministry of Education, but youth organisations were still the core of youth work. The basic idea was that youth had to learn civic ideals and practices in voluntary youth organisations. Youth's own organisations became more and more acceptable, but the political activity of young people was still under suspicion, especially among the conservatives. Anyhow, for example, the techniques of meetings were a part of youth organisations' training programmes. After the Second World War, fascist and extreme right-wing youth organisations were suppressed and the communist youth movement was legalised. From 1946, there was an important national co-operation body which got together practically all Finnish youth organisations. The importance of citizenship education in international arenas was also emphasised after national aspirations. In 1964, a co-operation body was closed down because of the political tensions and difficulties in the relationship with the Soviet Union.

State support of youth work was regularised in the 1950s when a part of the state's pools prizes was channelled into youth work. So during the 1950s about 50 national youth organisations got annual state subsidies. Municipal youth work was also developed, because part of the profits from the state's alcohol-producing company was channelled into municipalities. The main function of municipal youth work was also to support local youth associations. The whole system of youth work was based on citizenship education given by youth organisations, but their activities were selective by nature. The first more detailed youth survey in 1955 indicated that 54% of young people (10-29 years old) were members of at least one youth organisation (Allardt et al. 1958). According to the study, members of organisations were active in other parts of social life, too. In fact, Finnish youth work was criticised for neglecting less

active and socially disadvantaged young people. As a consequence of this criticism and a national debate on juvenile delinquency and youth groups, which were visible in urban centres, local youth work began to organise activities for young people in youth centres and youth cafes. These innovations were criticised by some leaders of youth organisations because they thought youth work should be more target oriented than in youth houses and in youth cafes.

In the period of reconstruction, Finnish youth work still saw young people as future citizens, and in youth organisations they learned social and civic skills, such as co-operation, positions of trust and working in a group without adult supervision. In unstable post-war conditions, the Finnish identity was still strongly emphasised: young people would be citizens in a Finnish nation state. Finland developed as a relatively homogenous nation, where internal cultural, religious or linguistic conflicts were not severe and youth organisations made their own contributions to development.

### → Youth work in the society of welfare

The baby boom generation was born in the 1940s and 1950s in agricultural Finland where it also grew up. They reached maturity in the 1960s and 1970s when Finland industrialised and became urbanised very quickly and many welfare reforms (for example, study grants, comprehensive schools, National Health Act) were carried out. Old structures of society were seen as part of “the old power” and “the old culture”. The pressure of the baby boomers, international influences, elitist youth radicalism and the strengthening of youth cultures made room for the young themselves in all forms of youth work.

In the 1960s new youth policy thinking began to emerge. This gave rise to an integral youth policy approach in which the aim was to improve young people’s growth environment and enhance their influence. The political youth organisations and the interest-led youth organisations were the key agents of youth policy and the political rights of the youth were pointed out. Youth policy was adopted as a comprehensive strategy of public administration, too. The basic idea was to influence young people’s growth environments through research, rational planning and local decision making.

As a part of the era’s welfare reforms, the long-awaited legislation on youth work was finally passed in the 1970s, guaranteeing the financial support of youth work by the state. Under this legislation, the youth work system was established on the principles that had taken form over the course of decades. Municipal youth boards were fixed by law and the legislation guaranteed the primacy of youth organisations in the field. The function of the public administration was to support organisations. Political youth work gained in strength and gave young people a chance to participate and exert mass power.

All this led to the reconstruction of the concept of citizenship in youth work. Young people were not only taught citizenship skills, they tried to carry them out in youth organisations supported by the public youth work system. Young people were elected to the youth boards, different kinds of “youth elections” were arranged, the voting age was reduced and in the 1970s there was a famous school democracy experiment. With the help of the youth policy strategy and through the youth organisations and the youth boards, a number of young people tried to reform society and influence their growth environment. Even the non-political youth organisations formulated different kinds of social and youth policy programmes.



Both the youth policy approach and the emphasis on political activity soon met difficulties. The expectations placed on youth policy strategy failed to materialise in full, and youth policy turned into an ineffective bureaucratic system. It became evident that the Ministry of Education and the local youth boards could not effectively influence young people's growth environments and the decisions of other administrative branches, not to mention economic markets, business and industry. It was more a question of common economic and political development than the outcomes of youth policy activities. Despite the modest outcome, the youth policy approach drew youth work's attention to young people's living conditions and growth environments.

In the 1980s it transpired that the idea of politically and socially engaged youth underpinning the legislation had been over-optimistic. During the 1980s political youth organisations lost their position in young people's lives. In 1988, 63% of young people (10-24) were members of organisations, most of them sport organisations. Only 2% were members of political youth or student organisations and the turnout of young voters tended to be low, too. Only an insignificant part of the youth wanted to be politically active in traditional ways. On the other hand, as a signal of late-modern change, part of the social activities and participation was channelled into free youth movements, activism, youth cultures and consumption. During the era of the welfare society, Finland saw the rise and fall of political activity amongst the youth. Conceptually, youth were no longer only future citizens; youth was a valuable phase of life per se. Young people had their own political channels and rights to participate, even if they did not use them as was expected.

During the 1980s special youth work became a means of youth work. Youth workers paid more attention to young people's problems with drugs, alcohol and crime. Youth work became more professionalised and there was a growing interest in the social citizenship rights of marginalised youth. After the disappointment of youth policy, youth work also paid new attention to hobbies and education and, for example, in youth centres a method of collective education was used as a means of citizenship education of non-organised youth. This rise of special youth work and municipal youth houses was a challenge for voluntary youth organisations. During the 1980s, there was a deepening tension between municipal youth work and youth organisations, because youth organisations saw the strengthening of the field work of the municipalities as a threat to youth organisations' subsidies.

Finnish youth work legislation was revised in the 1980s and in the new act the priority of the youth organisations received support. According to the Youth Work Act, local authorities could receive state grants towards the salaries of youth workers doing field work. State grants were also made available for more free-form activities organised by young people themselves. In the new act traditional youth organisations and associations still had their privileged status, but it took local youth activities and young people's free action groups into account in a new way. Signs of late-modern changes were identifiable.

### → Reflections on the concept of youth work and youth organisations

Historical research on youth work indicates that there is no unambiguous or generally accepted concept of youth work in Finland. Of course, it is possible to find politically and administratively defined concepts of youth work in the existing legislation, but it is not suitable for a scientific analysis of the phenomenon. We need theoretically defined concepts of youth work that enable comprehensive and

comparative analysis of youth work. Those kinds of concepts also help to see the historical modifications of youth work.

From a historical perspective, in practice youth work consists of the activities that are organised or supported by youth associations and organisations, civic organisations, congregations, churches, communities, state authorities, schools and different kinds of multi-professional networks. This kind of organisational definition of youth work can be labelled as an extensional concept of youth work: it glues together the organisations that belong to the domain of youth work.

There have been several interpretations of the relationship between youth organisations and youth work in Finland. Sometimes youth organisations have been part of youth work, sometimes they represented a separate category supported by the public administration. Sometimes youth organisations are separated from youth movements, which are seen more as non-formal and flexible communities, sometimes organisations and movements are used as synonyms. There has also been a debate on organisations of youth and organisations for youth. The former is an autonomous organisation of young people themselves, often of young adults, and the latter is more or less led by adults. There is also a tendency of “governmentalising” Finnish youth work: over the years the public authorities have assumed tasks which had traditionally belonged to the youth organisations.

During my research work, I also investigated the essence of youth work more analytically: the characteristics and functions of youth work through the ages. As a preliminary conclusion, I have theoretically constructed one concept of Finnish youth work (Nieminen 2007, pp. 38-9). According to this definition, youth work can be defined as guided and collective activity which is based on young people’s needs and voluntary participation. The aim of this activity is to integrate young people into society and offer possibilities for learning and to develop personality, society and culture. This kind of definition of youth work can be labelled as an intensional concept of youth work: it gleans and binds logically together the characteristics that are essential to youth work.

Based on my historical studies, four general functions of youth work can be introduced: (1) socialisation, (2) personalisation, (3) compensation and (4) resourcing and allocation (Nieminen 2007, pp. 21-7). The function of socialisation means that youth work helps young people to join the society. In terms of personalisation, youth work guides young people’s personal development towards autonomy and self-knowledge. The third function of youth work is to compensate deprivations and difficulties in socialisation and personalisation processes. It is done by means of special youth work. The fourth function is resourcing and allocation which means that youth work influences the amount and content of society’s resources for youth. It is an area of youth policy. As Finnish development shows, modern youth work has fulfilled these four functions in different ways and with varying emphasis.

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## **History of youth work and youth policy in Austria**

**T**his paper focuses on the history of youth policy and youth work policy in Austria, more than on youth work history since the diversity of different approaches to youth work could not be reflected in this article.

### **→ Outline of a history of youth work in Austria**

As in many other countries in central Europe before the mid-19th century, the beginnings of youth work in Austria can be found in the religious sphere. The goal of these interventions was to support those young people who had to leave their well-known (often rural) surroundings for educational or professional reasons. In many cases, these young people had to search for work or for opportunities to learn a profession in the growing cities and found themselves in an unknown and hostile environment without any social support. As in Germany, the ideas of Adolph Kolping were very influential on these first approaches. His idea was to establish so-called “Kolping families” and build houses for apprentices coming from the countryside to provide them with a place to sleep and with a community to take care of them.

A different approach of young apprentices and young workers was followed after 1884 by the Verband junger Arbeiter (association of young workers), the predecessor organisation to the socialist youth. This organisation cared about the education and rights of workers, and also offered a social community. Parallel to church and socialist approaches, liberal as well as German-national (*deutsch national*) forces were active in out-of-school youth education – mostly in physical education and cultural activities. From 1908 onwards, a spin-off of the Scout movement was active in Vienna. In this movement, out-of-school physical education was the main objective.

Overall, the social tendencies that were present at the *fin de siècle* during the Habsburg monarchy were reflected in the approaches of out-of-school youth education as well.

After the First World War, Austria remained a small country compared to its previous expanse, and its inhabitants lacked a clear idea of what “Austria” and “Austrian” meant. German-national and Austrian-national tendencies disagreed on the concept of the state; monarchists, socialists, communists and liberals all had their ideas of future developments, whilst the Catholic Church tried to strongly influence political development. One can interpret these approaches to extra-curricular youth work as a reflection of these political movements trying to dictate their views in debates about the “definition” of Austria and future Austrian policy in out-of-school youth education. Both the Socialist Worker Youth (Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend) and the Communist Proletarian Youth (Kommunistische Proletarierjugend) saw apprentices and young workers as their main target group. The Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend was founded in 1919 as successor to the Verband junger Arbeiter whereas the Kommunistische Proletarierjugend was founded directly after the war in the year 1918. These two organisations held similar views to their parent parties, and saw their role in organising young workers in accordance with these aims.

The associations of bourgeois Catholic pupils and students, who saw Austria as a nation, opposed both the liberal attitudes of (often Jewish) intellectuals and socialist and communist tendencies, as well as a pan-German confederation of Germany and Austria.

Other ideologies of the early 1920s were also active in the field of youth education, including liberal, German-national, Austrian-national and church-based Catholic organisations. Retrospectively, it seems that youth education in the various organisations was aimed, in the main, at recruiting and organising their own offspring by indoctrinating young people. A similar approach could be seen in the sports organisations, where at least the umbrella organisations had clear political and ideological orientations.

The ideological conflicts and confrontations cumulated in the civil war conflicts of February 1934 when the socialist and the – already forbidden – communist workers’ organisations together with the Schutzbund (defence league) fought against the Austro-fascist corporative system represented by the Heimwehr (home defence force) and the army. Both paramilitary organisations – the Heimwehr and the Schutzbund – recruited heavily from their youth organisations, in which over the years political information (and indoctrination) was offered. After the February disturbances, the Social Democratic Workers’ Party and all associated organisations were outlawed, so were the socialist worker youth. The only youth organisations left in existence and able to exert some influence were the church-based ones, the Scouts, and (non-liberal) pupil and student organisations.

Meanwhile, the NSDAP (National Socialist Party) and its youth organisations were organised illegally and became larger and larger so, after the accession (*Anschluss*) of Austria to the Third Reich, they were functioning and active immediately. Youth work was mainly carried out in the youth organisations of the National Socialist Party, the Hitlerjugend and the Bund deutscher Mädchen, and had the clear aim of indoctrinating young people with the ideology of the national socialist system. Religious-based youth movements lost their influence and independence from political pressure, and the youth organisations of the Austro-fascist Jungbünde and Landbünde were forbidden.

Right after the Second World War and the rebirth of Austria as an independent state, many youth organisations were (re)established. Socialist Youth Austria (Sozialistische Jugend Österreich), for instance, was founded the day after the Constitution of the Republic of Austria was adopted. Also in the same year, the Austrian youth movement (Österreichische Jugendbewegung), the predecessor to the Junge Volkspartei, the youth organisation of the Austrian People's Party, was founded. Also, the communist youth organisation was re-established in the year 1945. Its name back then was Free Austrian Youth (Freie Österreichische Jugend). Politically (more) independent organisations like the Catholic Youth of Austria (Katholische Jugend Österreich), the Scouts (Pfadfinder), Rural Youth (Landjugend), the Catholic Children's Movement (Jungschar) and others were founded in the period between 1945 and 1950. This is a further indicator of the close connection between youth work and policy in Austria. The main focus of youth work in the post-war period was education on democracy, as well as on values and attitudes. Recreation and fun were of secondary importance. Priorities included promoting the feeling of community and voluntary work, and tackling the problem of unemployment.

In the 1960s and 1970s new forms of youth work were established: open youth work was the new approach that received ever-increasing attention. Open youth work was not an alternative to existing forms of youth work carried out by organisations, but an addition to it. Youth clubs and youth centres were founded, and the opportunity to visit those institutions and participate reflected the trend of growing individuality.

The demographic changes and the increased number of young people with a migration background led, from the 1970s onwards, to altered needs and demands on youth work – both on open youth work and in organisations.

### → The creation of special interest groups in youth work

Already in the year 1953, an umbrella organisation for the youth organisations in the form of a youth council, the Österreichische Bundesjugendring, was founded. The seven founding organisations were religious-based youth organisations (Protestants, Catholics), two Scout organisations, the youth organisation of the trade union, and the youth organisations of the two political parties (socialists and people's party).

In the opening speech, it was pointed out that common interests should prevail over existing differences and that work should be carried out in co-operation in order to favour democratic development. In the first articles of the association's statute, the general direction and the tasks of this umbrella structure were described as follows:

1. to foster a common understanding and a willingness for co-operation within the Austrian youth;
2. to contribute to the solution of youth problems;

3. to support the healthy youth to live in accordance with ethical, social and cultural norms;
4. to get involved in open questions in the field of youth policy, and child and youth rights;
5. to contribute to a financial plan for the support of out-of-school youth education;
6. to lobby for the youth organisations;
7. to co-operate with the public authorities in bringing as many children and young people as possible into the youth organisations;
8. to oppose other tendencies of (public) national or semi-public organisation of young people;
9. to counter militaristic, nationalistic and totalitarian tendencies; and
10. to advocate together democratic youth education.

From this it becomes clear that the youth forum understood itself to be a representative body for all young people in Austria, since they wanted to get as many youngsters as possible involved in one of their member organisations. Furthermore, the democratic reorientation of young Austrians is seen as a common task for all youth organisations and is therefore supported by the youth forum. This was a clear signal at a time of Allied occupation of Austria that all youth organisations wanted democracy and freedom.

During the next 50 years the number of members grew to over 30, during which time their tasks changed. For example, instead of the aim of fostering co-operation among Austrian youth, co-operation between children's and youth organisations should be encouraged; and instead of efforts to get as many young people as possible involved in youth organisations, co-operation with the public authorities in supporting and educating children and juveniles was promoted. Furthermore, international representation became another task for the youth forum. In 2001, the Bundesjugendvertretung was established as the successor to the Bundesjugendring, taking over its entire remit.

In 2008, open youth work got its own lobby organisation. The establishment of bOJA as a network agency for open youth work provided the opportunity for open youth work to exchange best practices but also to get involved in policy making in a structured way.

### → Youth policy development

Parallel to the development of youth work, youth organisations and youth work methods, there were changes in legislation concerning young people. With an examination of specific youth laws as well as other laws that affect young people in a significant way, one can see the needs of young people and can understand the development of youth work.

It is not surprising to see that laws concerning young people reflect the main political tendencies of the interwar period: for example, the first law of the Austrian Republic (1919) that concerned itself with young people directly was aimed at improving working conditions (under a government that included the Social Democratic Workers' Party). The so-called night-shift law states that juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 – as well as women – are not allowed to work at night. The next law from the year 1922 was concerned with youth protection: it was forbidden to serve alcohol or to sell it to young people – with the exception of those who were getting it for adults.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the political conflicts between the conservatives, who were in government, and the socialists and communists became more pronounced. In 1931, the youth organisation of the Communist Party, the Communist Proletariat Youth, was forbidden, as was the Communist Party itself.

From 1933 onwards, the form of government was dictatorial and tensions between the conservatives, who were in favour of the corporate state (*Ständestaat*), and the socialists grew ever greater until February 1934, when armed conflicts started. After the civil war in February 1934, all socialist and social-democratic children and youth organisations were banned together with the Social Democratic Workers' Party (Sozialdemokratische Arbeiter Partei, SDAP). After this move, many of the socialist organisations worked illegally.

It is revealing that one law that concerned youth is the law of 1936 on patriotic out-of-school education. This law stated that all organisations that wanted to practise youth work had to submit an application to the Ministry of Education and deliver their educational curriculum before they could legally form the organisation. However, Catholic-based youth organisations were exempted. With this law, youth education in and out of school was now entirely under state control. And the role of out-of-school youth education was clearly defined as well: its task was education – or better indoctrination – according to the ideology of the Austro-fascist corporate state, based on the ideas of the Catholic Church. When Austria joined the Third Reich in 1938, youth organisations that had a close connection with Austro-fascism were forbidden.

After the Second World War, the legal framework for youth work was prescribed at the level of the nine federal countries with the establishment of the Landesjugendreferate by an edict of the Ministry of Education in 1946. These administrative units were in charge of youth, out-of-school youth education and the provision of youth work. Accordingly, youth work became, on the one hand, legally controlled and, on the other hand, detached from schooling. The tasks of the newly established Landesjugendreferenten were defined in five fields, namely, to:

1. forward proposals, plans, wishes and inquiries of the youth department in the federal ministry to youth organisations in the province (*Bundesland*);
2. transmit proposals, suggestions and applications from youth organisations to the federal ministry in the correct formal and objective manner;
3. promote and control education and further training of youth that had left school, their artistic activities and youth literature;
4. promote and control the physical education of youth (trekking, sports, youth hostelling, games);
5. accomplish social tasks, such as co-operation among youth organisations and autonomy (youth parliament); practical social work (programme "youth for youth"); connect with foreign youth agencies.

With this edict, youth work was more or less defined as a concern of the federal states, thus the task of co-ordination between the federal ministry and the local/regional youth organisations became obvious.

The task of the units to control the education and further training of young people offered by youth organisations is remarkable. Furthermore, it is of considerable interest that the target group for youth work is young people who have reached the age when they do not have to attend school any more. So, these units in the



departments of education in the regional governments gained control not only of the education of pupils but also of other young people.

But only a few years later, the task of controlling education and training in youth work organisations was no longer mentioned. At the conference of the Landesjugendreferenten in 1954, support and promotion became the main assignments. In particular, the promotion and support of organised and non-organised young people was to be the aim of these units. Furthermore, the main objectives of the educational approach of youth work were defined as humanity, tolerance, civic understanding and democratic disposition. International relations were also a topic, as were the preservation and fostering of tradition and folklore, and a feeling of patriotic belonging. Supporting abstinence from alcohol and narcotics was a means of health promotion and education. The wide-ranging tasks of the Landesjugendreferenten showed that youth (work) policy was already, as long ago as the 1950s, a horizontal topic that impinged on many policy fields.

From the 1970s onwards, the promotion of open methods of youth work was included in the list of duties for the units. Explicitly mentioned were also initiatives for young people in migrant worker families (*Gastarbeiterjugend*). Over all, a distinct orientation towards service and support in the youth work policy of the federal states can be detected.

Legislation on youth is also a concern of the regions; and one can find youth protection laws in all nine federal states – dating back to the 1940s. In particular, protection concerning alcohol, narcotics and (pornographic) media – like movies, theatres and magazines – were covered by these laws, although these laws contained many differences among the federal states (and still today no consistent law on youth protection exists in Austria, even though they are now very homogeneous). However, extra-curricular youth work was not tackled in regional laws until 1977. In this year, a law on youth was passed by the regional authorities in Vorarlberg, one of the nine Austrian countries. In this law, youth protection, youth (work) promotion and the representation of young people by youth organisations were covered. Since then other federal states have developed their own laws on youth and created legal regulations for youth protection, youth (work) promotion and representation.

At the national level, three other dates are of particular importance. In 1962, the first financial budget for out-of-school youth work was developed, *Bundesjugendplan*. In this plan, state spending on out-of-school youth work amounted to 20 million Austrian schillings, whilst the entire national budget stood at 54 billion Austrian schillings. Out of that 20 million, approximately 12.5 million were given to the youth organisations for their work, 6.5 million for hostelling and the rest for the work of the youth forum.

The second important date was 1983, when responsibility for youth work affairs was taken away from the Federal Ministry of Education, and the Federal Ministry for Family, Youth and Consumer Protection was established. In this ministry, a department is in charge of youth and extra-curricular youth work at the national level. Since 1983, during most of the legislative periods, the term “youth” has also been part of the name of the federal ministry in charge of youth affairs (with the exception of the period between 2000 and 2007).

The year 2000 is also important for the first enactment of national laws on youth promotion and youth representation. These two laws cover the topic of youth work

for the first time at national level. The ways in which youth organisations are supported and how they should be included in youth policy making are stipulated in these laws. (Until then, only youth welfare was dealt with in a national law, although other laws mentioned youth and juveniles.)

Over all, we can see a very close connection between youth policy and youth work during the past century in Austria. Although youth work was sometimes nothing more than the executive body of national policy, it was more frequently an important partner in youth policy development.

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# **The history of youth work and its relevance for youth policy in Serbia today**

*Zora Krnjaić*

## **→ Historical perspective**

An attempt to give a broader framework and historical perspective to the development of youth policy in Serbia is a very difficult task because of the complex history of Serbia and the former Yugoslavia (different states and different names). It deserves a comprehensive historical approach; however, this paper's primary aim is to give one possible perspective with an accompanying historical background on youth policy in Serbia. More precisely, certain important phases and key milestones for this topic will be highlighted and discussed in a socio-cultural and historical context.

Different types of youth care have existed in different historical periods, from early forms in the Serbian Kingdom (in the 19th century) up to the systematic institutional approach of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia (formed in 2007).

An overview of the main features that are important for the development of youth policy in Serbia will be presented. These date back to the 19th century, and indeed further, in certain cases.

## → Different organisations of children and youth care

Different forms of child and youth care existed even at the end of the 19th century, during the 20th century in the Serbian Kingdom and later, after the First World War, in the Yugoslav Kingdom. The purpose of the first organisations was of a humanitarian nature.

One of the oldest organisations of this kind is that of the Friends of Children of Serbia. Originally, it was called the Society for Help and Education of Poor and Abandoned Children. They have been active almost continuously since 1880, with small interruptions during war periods (Potkonjak 2000).<sup>42</sup> Also, one of the most important organisations which, at that time, existed both in Serbia and at the international level was the Scout Organisation of Serbia. In Serbia, this organisation was founded in 1911 (by Dr Milos D. Popovic). After the Second World War, in 1950, they resumed their activities and the organisation still exists today.<sup>43</sup>

A series of small-scale organisations were also formed during the 20th century in Serbia, for example:

- Youth Hostels Association of Yugoslavia (founded in 1920);<sup>44</sup>
- Youth Music of Serbia (founded in 1950); the original name was the Society of Friends of Serbia;
- Nature Conservation Movement of Serbia (founded in 1960);<sup>45</sup>

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42. The aim of the organisation is to promote and enable the rights of children and create conditions for their carefree and happy childhood, to respect the child's position in society, and advance the free, harmonious and optimal development of all children in the spirit of our traditions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It functions in municipal organisations. Currently, there are 39 organisations. Members are parents, teachers, professionals who work with children, and others.

43. Currently, in Serbia there are 80 Scout groups and independent companies, with about 4 000 members and 500 leaders. The Scout Organisation of Serbia is a member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), which represents the world's largest movement of non-formal education. Some of the particular goals of these organisations were/are: the participation of youth in the process of informal education throughout their development, the application of a special method that teaches each individual to be the main carrier of their own development process, developing a love of nature and the life in it, understanding its laws, education of members and the development of qualities such as: diligence, humility, creativity, communication, tolerance, perseverance, resourcefulness, courage, sincerity, honesty, thrift and a sense of living and working in small and large groups. It develops respect for others, friendship among people and nations, and respect for their personal, religious and political beliefs, and others.

44. The Youth Hostels Association of Yugoslavia was founded in 1920 in Sarajevo. The first seaside resort was built in 1923. During the Second World War the movement stopped its activities, but renewed them in 1952. The goal of this organisation is to promote youth mobility and tourism, and their guidelines are: "Travelling broadens your mind" and "Get to know your homeland in order to love it more".

45. The Nature Conservation Movement of Serbia was founded in 1960, when afforestation activity took place under the banner of "Month of the forest". This is a strong, still existing organisation, which originated from that small-scale action. Its objectives are: planting and protecting forests and vegetation outside forests, environmental education and raising environmental awareness among citizens of all ages, encouraging active public participation in decision-making processes of importance for the environment and promotion of volunteerism.

- Young Researchers of Serbia (founded in 1969) developed from the research movement. Today, it is a national-level organisation and consists of three divisions: Youth, Volunteer Service of Serbia and the Protection and Improvement of the Environment.<sup>46</sup>

### → New state – new patterns

After the Second World War, the new state of Yugoslavia was formed, where new patterns of child and youth care were developed. We have to emphasise that, during and after the war, anti-fascist and ideological influences were predominant in these new forms of child and youth care.

The most promoted values were brotherhood, equality, solidarity (in today's vocabulary, intergenerational solidarity, social inclusion and cohesion), friendship, liberty and collectivity.<sup>47</sup>

During that period, the personality cult of President Josip Broz Tito was encouraged among young people in many different ways. For example, Youth Day was celebrated on 25 May, Tito's birthday. Celebrations for Youth Day were carefully prepared, involving a lot of children and young people in different activities all over the country.

Between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s, youth work activities were very popular, including voluntary labour by young people. The main goal of this type of action was the building of public infrastructure (roads, railways, etc.), but it also involved other structured activities (for example, sports and cultural activities) and the promotion of mobility among young people. Their motto was "We are building railways – Railways are building us".

It indicates the collective effort in building a new society, on the one hand, and, on the other, an understanding of the nature of human development.

The biggest and the most important organisation after the Second World War was the Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia. Every child became a pioneer in first grade (at the age of 7). It functioned as a kind of preparation for children to become members of a collective. The instructors who worked in schools with younger pupils, and prepared them, were older pupils from the same school.

At the end of primary school, pupils become members of the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, an organisation identified as carrying out public duties and obligations.<sup>48</sup>

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46. Their motto is "Think big, do little – start an avalanche" and their goals are: raising awareness of the need to protect and preserve the environment, promotion and development of voluntary movements, co-operation with international organisations, and popularisation of scientific research and creativity among young people. Young Researchers of Serbia is a member of many international organisations.

47. Symbols (such as, uniforms, anthems, rules) and symbolic rituals also had strong messages of collectivity.

48. The genealogy of the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia: Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (youth wing of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia between 1919 and 1948); after the Second World War, together with the Unified League of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia, the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia formed the People's Youth of Yugoslavia; and the People's Youth of Yugoslavia was later renamed the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (which disbanded in the early 1990s).

## → Period of crisis during the 1990s

After the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, certain institutions concerned with youth issues, as well as the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia, folded. Therefore, foreign donors and NGOs took care of the needs of young people.

During the 1990s, various activities, and NGO programmes and youth projects in Serbia were supported by international organisations and aimed at certain social groups of children and youth. A significant number of programmes and projects were specifically designed for refugee and internally displaced children and youth, whilst others were organised as workshops and extra-curricular activities for all pupils at school or as an integral part of the regular curriculum.<sup>49</sup>

The activities of some NGOs and the nature of some projects were primarily of a humanitarian nature. A large number of projects focused on non-violent communication, non-violent conflict resolution, mediation, tolerance, active citizenship, etc. Some programmes were dedicated to educators working in school with pupils. A distinct kind of activity and form of participation during this period was the student movement, with large-scale student movements/protests in Serbia in the 1990s; student demonstrations in 1992; and a student rebellion in 1996-97. The student protests in Serbia in the 1990s were very specific and had distinctive cultural characteristics (they were original, offering new forms of communication, and with humorous messages), in the sense that they had a formative role in articulating patterns of massive civic protest in Serbia.

## → Youth activism in the genesis of the ministry

For a long time, there was no institutional, strategic or legal framework dealing with youth policy at national level. In addition, the evidence, research and programmes dedicated to this segment of the population were sporadic and insufficient. Of course, it does not mean that there were no activities in this field.

In November 2001, the Youth Section (in the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia) was established as the only governmental body in the Republic of Serbia responsible for youth issues, although after the elections in 2004 it was closed down. As a reaction there was intensive advocacy of youth NGOs gathered within the Youth Coalition of Serbia to establish a national body that would be in charge of dealing with youth policy.

Young people in Serbia joined the NGO initiative and blocked the work of the government with their request to get an appropriate ministry to bear the name "youth". This idea had to be accepted by the youth wings of the political parties, so that they could put pressure on their political leaders to understand the importance

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49. For example: the Programme for Supporting and Promoting Child Development within a War-Affected Social Context (known as "Smile keepers" supported by UNICEF); the Education of Refugee Children in the War-Disturbed Environment project (supported by UNESCO); Goodwill Classroom, etc. For the majority of these programmes and projects the cultural-historical theory of L. S. Vygotsky was the theoretical and methodological framework. More precisely, most of them were based on Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory and the concepts of interaction and social construction (Vygotsky 1978).

of the topic. And then, after premature parliamentary elections in May 2007, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia was formed.<sup>50</sup>

The birth of this particular ministry speaks volumes about youth activism, and how young people can change the institutional landscape and how significant the partnership between the governmental and non-governmental sectors is. So, the situation had been significantly changed and youth care became one of the priorities of state policy.

### → Triple process

In fact, the ministry conducted a triple-pronged approach. Firstly, a National Youth Strategy was developed. In partnership with different stakeholders, preparations were begun to create a National Youth Strategy, because Serbia was the only country in the region without such a strategy. Secondly, there were awareness-raising exercises to stress the importance of youth policy. The ministry co-operated with the media, creating campaigns with young people as active participants and promoters of human rights, the Millennium Development Goals, the environment, healthy lifestyles, peer education, non-formal education, etc. Thirdly, a network for implementing youth policy was developed and empowered. Co-operation and fruitful sustainable partnerships between NGOs and the government were formed. When the process of developing the National Youth Strategy was taking place, NGOs began to implement the goals defined by it. There is continuous support for the projects of youth associations and associations dealing with youth. This third process of development and empowerment of the implementation network also includes very important mechanisms for improving the everyday lives of young people: namely, local youth offices.

### → Creating a strategy with youth and for youth

The preconditions for the National Youth Strategy development were: a long consultative process, research on youth and co-operation between state bodies, the non-governmental sector and the young people themselves (Krnjaić and Mitrović 2009). Through research, consultation, 167 round tables, seven regional and three central conferences 16 000 young people were mobilised, together with 41 NGOs, 18 ministries and a large number of experts in order to articulate the strategy. And then, after a year, on 9 May 2008, the Government of Serbia adopted the National Youth Strategy, which detailed the relationship of the state with young people and the role of young people in society. Also, the action plan for the strategy's implementation was adopted; it helped that young people were recognised in the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2009, through the activities of 16 ministries. The process was evaluated as successful by young people themselves, as well as by the Council of Europe's independent experts on youth policy (Denstad 2009).

In the development of the strategy more than 16 000 young people participated in different ways. This indicates the success of the initiative, because in general, the participation rates of young people, especially certain groups of young people, are low. This is a recognised issue even in countries with developed youth policies and a well-developed youth work field (Coussée 2008; Williamson 1997).

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50. Besides the Sector for Youth, the Ministry of Youth and Sport includes the Sector for Sport and the Sector for Project Management.



The vision of this strategy is that young people in Serbia in the 21st century are active and equal participants in all areas of social life and they have equal rights and possibilities for full development of their potentials. It refers to their active roles in family life, education, employment, health and overall social life. The strategy also presents the relationship of the state towards youth, which it sees as possessing creative potential.

The principle of co-management was illustrated by the fact that the strategy included the Manifesto of the Youth of Serbia (Youth Manifesto) as an integral part. In that manifesto, young people described themselves and clearly expressed their expectations. It is the “voice of young people” and according to reports (Denstad 2009), it led to renewed efforts among the youth organisations in order to co-operate and establish a common umbrella structure. The mission is to bring back young people’s faith in institutions. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to give them hope that they will be able to influence institutions with their energy and activism. It is important to emphasise that a wide consultative process and transparency in development are essential for building the confidence of young people in institutions, as well as developing feelings of ownership, or an awareness that their combined force might make a significant difference.

### → The First Serbian National Youth Strategy

The National Youth Strategy was adopted on 9 May 2008, Europe Day. The action plan for implementation of the strategy for the period 2009-14 was adopted in January 2009.

In the strategy, the ministry refers to young people between the ages of 15 and 30. There are about a million and a half young people in Serbia, which accounts for 20% of the total population.<sup>51</sup> The strategy is an intersectoral document that includes the outputs of the consultative process, and is based on relevant and available data and research initiated by the Ministry of Youth and Sport (research was commissioned on the following topics: active youth participation in social life, everyday life of youth in Serbia and their activities, capacities of youth NGOs and NGOs dealing with youth for participation in the implementation of youth policy). Some 11 objectives were defined for the strategy. They incorporate all those areas that were highlighted (by the participants in the consultative process) as being especially important for the overall life of young people in Serbia.

The strategic objectives are to:

- encourage young people to participate actively in society;
- develop youth co-operation and to provide conditions for participation in decision-making processes through a sustainable institutional framework, based on the needs of young people and in co-operation with youth;
- establish a system of youth information at all levels and in all areas;
- achieve the right to equality of chances for all young people in society, and especially for those who live under difficult conditions;
- encourage and evaluate the extraordinary results and achievements of young people in different areas;
- improve the possibilities of youth to spend quality leisure time;

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51. In 2050, there will be an expected 18% of young people (1 188 637), aged between 15 and 30.

- develop an open, effective, efficient and justifiable system of formal and non-formal education available to all young people, which is in line with world educational trends and the educational context in the Republic of Serbia;
- encourage and stimulate all forms of employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship;
- improve the conditions for a secure life for young people;
- protect and improve health, to decrease health risks and to develop youth-friendly health promotion techniques;
- empower young people in the initiatives and activities that are in line with the basic goals of sustainable development and a healthy environment.

In implementing the 11 objectives of the National Youth Strategy, there are three key areas of activities, namely: participation, potential and prevention. It is in line with “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering” (2009).

Participation implies active participation in society, development of institutional frameworks and spending quality leisure time. The second key area is potential, which means development of extraordinary results and achievements, formal and non-formal education and (self-)employment and entrepreneurship. The last key area, prevention, implies safe living, health and sustainable development.

It is important to stress that, to achieve the aforementioned objectives, it is necessary to provide conditions to realise two important goals, namely an increase in equal opportunities for all young people in society, and especially those living in tough conditions, and to increase the level of information that is available to young people at all levels and in all areas.

The action plan for the implementation of the strategy defines the activities, expected results, indicators of success, jurisdictions, deadlines, financial means, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy’s implementation, as well as the possibilities for its improvement.

Youth offices play a key role in conducting the strategy at local level, in informing young people and in realising different programmes and activities for youth. Programmes for youth are supported through the projects of youth associations and associations dealing with youth.

### → The role of the local youth offices

The Ministry of Youth and Sport provides the national framework and deals with the creation and implementation of national youth policy, but it is also necessary to engage local self-governments to deal with the needs of young people in the local community. The strategy envisages the establishment of local and regional youth offices that will have a key role in implementation of the goals defined by the document.

Up until the formation of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, only five municipalities in Serbia had a youth office, now there are 112 (October 2010). Also, six regional offices, established with the aim of providing efficient support, communication and exchanges of information in co-operation with the local youth offices, were opened. The goals of the local youth offices are: affirmation of young people and their inclusion in society, support for youth initiatives and projects, economic empowerment of young people, non-formal education of young people, youth information, promotion of voluntary work, and possibilities for spending quality leisure time.

The ministry is in charge of providing professional and advisory help to local authorities in the process of establishing local youth offices, for strengthening the capacities of local youth offices and for financing the programmes and projects of the local self-governed organisations in the youth policy field through different calls for tenders.

On the other hand, local self-government is in charge of providing space for the local youth office, allocating the financial means from the municipal budget for the office's work and choosing the co-ordinator of such an office.

The local youth office is the operational body within the municipality that: develops and implements local youth action plans, establishes co-operation with all relevant stakeholders and works on their networking in order to satisfy the needs of young people, provides technical, material and financial support to youth organisations and projects, conducts research and prints different publications.

Within the local youth office, young people can: obtain information about their rights and possibilities, attend different events, have free access to the Internet, organise social gatherings, cultural activities, etc.

### → Fund for Young Talent

The Fund for Young Talent was formed after a governmental decision of 24 July 2008; the Ministry of Youth and Sport was stipulated as the institution in charge of implementing its decisions. The National Youth Strategy is also to be partially implemented through the work of the fund.

One of the objectives of the fund is to enhance, develop, recognise and appraise the extraordinary achievements of young people in different fields. Through the articulation of this objective, the character of the strategy itself is expressed, which recognises young people as the potential and resource of society.

In previous periods, three types of open calls aimed at supporting the financial cost of education and helping gifted pupils and students were conducted:

- scholarships for the best 500 students that matriculated in graduate or post-graduate studies in EU countries and at the world's leading universities;
- scholarships for up to 1 000 of the best students to study in Serbia;
- awards for high school pupils and students who achieved the best results in national and international competitions in 2007.

In this way, from 2008 onwards, over 4 000 students have received scholarships/awards from the fund, including other types of support for young talent, and from different institutions and companies.<sup>52</sup> There are also possibilities for apprenticeships and study visits in foreign countries. A very important element of support for the personal and professional development of young talent is the centre for career guidance and counselling.

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52. For example, JAT Airways provides discounts on its regular routes for beneficiaries of the fund. Different institutions, organisations and companies – for example, the Volleyball Federation of Serbia, National Library and Microsoft – provide support in different ways

## → The future

The main objectives in future youth policy development in Serbia are: creating and developing institutional frameworks that are regulative without being restrictive in nature, which are absent to a great extent at present; developing and co-ordinating networks for the strategy's implementation through youth offices, youth programmes, support and co-operation between state bodies and the non-governmental sector; international co-operation; and making society aware of the importance of youth issues.

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## **Developmental psychology, youth sociology and social pedagogy – three perspectives on youth work and youth work policy**

Historically, there are three basic branches of knowledge relevant to youth work. They are developmental psychology, youth sociology and social pedagogy. These disciplines have contributed in different ways to youth work both in theory and practice. This paper discusses the characteristics of these fields of knowledge as well as their relationships with each other and the main contributions to youth work from a historical point of view. Attention is paid in particular to the concept and theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy.

### **→ Introduction**

Rousseau's *Emile* has been introduced as a starting point of the modern way of thinking in child-rearing and youth education. Rousseau's main point was to consider a child from the point of view of the development of society, as a developing creature influenced by society. Rousseau discussed the ruinous influences of society on the child and took education as an opportunity to protect children against them. At the same time, he opened a view on the dynamics of child development and started a new research interest, namely developmental psychology.

Combining the perspectives of individual development and social issues opened the way to socially oriented psychology, educational sociology and social pedagogy. The last one was introduced as an alternative to individual pedagogy. Such a theory of education is focused on a child's individual development without taking their social reality into consideration. Youth sociology actually developed much later as a particular field of sociological research of young people's social activities in terms of empirical investigation, critical analysis and theory of socialisation.

Youth research is a multidimensional area in which many kinds of perspectives, interests and activities cross, complement and take stock of each other. Developmental psychology, youth sociology and social pedagogy, especially this last one in the European continent, are the main fields of theory concerning youth and young people. They represent essentially different kinds of theoretical frames for youth work and youth work policies.

None of these three disciplines are theoretically coherent. Rather, they consist of competing views about research and knowledge. In any event, they form separate branches in the field of youth research. Each branch has its own characteristics from the point of view of history, knowledge sought, and epistemological interest. They embody different perspectives on youth, young people and youth work – on the one hand, complementing each other, and, on the other hand, representing an alternative to each other.

### → A psychological perspective

Developmental psychology deals with the psychological processes of human development over the course of a life. Different stages of development in different areas of personality have been identified by developmental psychologists. The field of developmental psychology includes the whole lifespan: the development of infants, children, adolescents, adults and ageing people.

Thus, adolescent psychology is a special area of developmental psychology. It is concerned with psychological development processes in youth. The earliest theories of the stages of human development were applied to infancy and childhood, although those relating to adolescence followed soon after. In particular, the developmental theory of Erik H. Erikson – influenced by the theory of psychoanalysis – opened up a special view of the dynamics of human development in adolescence. Erikson paid particular attention to the importance of social factors in human development and used the concept of psychosocial development.

From the very beginning, there have been attempts to apply psychological knowledge and theory building to youth work, especially to the field of child and youth welfare. For example, in Vienna, with the emergence of developmental psychology in the 1920s, Alfred Adler and Viktor E. Frank developed such educational activities. Besides this, child and adolescence psychiatry were also developed by the pioneers of the theory of human development. The tensions between psychoanalytic, behavioural and Gestalt movements can be seen already in early adolescence psychology and its applications.

### → A sociological perspective

Youth sociology did not come into existence as a special field of research until the Second World War. As a branch of social sciences, it has followed similar tendencies as regards the philosophy of science, epistemology and methodology

as social sciences in general. Numerous empirical studies as well as theoretical developments have been produced by youth sociologists. In some countries, the state supports youth studies in order to create a knowledge basis for youth and education policies.

Youth sociology deals with many kinds of social factors, from social interaction at a micro-level to systems and social structures at macro-level, in order to understand better young people's surroundings and life experiences. Such knowledge is needed to advance the social welfare of young people. From a historical point of view, pedagogical aspirations, in particular, brought knowledge about young people's living conditions, social interactions, lifestyles, subcultures, and mechanisms of behavioural problems into focus.

Youth, generational issues and socialisation have played important roles in sociology from the very beginning. Emile Durkheim, the founder of academic sociology, taught both sociology and pedagogy, and contributed to school reform in France at the end of the 19th century. Also in other countries, the early sociologists promoted pedagogical activities and welfare work among young people. The early modernisation processes raised new kinds of social problems, put youth into focus and challenged educationists and politicians to establish new institutions for youth education. Youth sociology was highly relevant to these aspirations even before it had come into existence as a particular branch of thinking and research.

### → A pedagogical perspective

Pedagogy is a discipline of the art of education. It refers to those human endeavours that seek to realise human development by educational means. As a field of human action, pedagogy differs from those disciplines which concentrate on knowledge production, in terms of describing and explaining reality. Pedagogy applies knowledge for practical purposes. The theory–practice relationship is a fundamental component of pedagogical thinking and action.

The history of education dates back many years, although the modern phase of pedagogy was started at the beginning of the 19th century: on the one hand, by the German educationist Johann Friedrich Herbart, who aimed at a systematic theory of education based on ethics and psychology and, on the other hand, by the Swiss theorist Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who developed a theory of education based on the ideas of a child-centred method and harmony of the physical, moral and intellectual development of personality. According to Herbart, ethics show the objectives of education and psychology, the means. Pestalozzi deduced the educational principles from human nature.

The concept of social pedagogy is not very clear because of the different interpretations. Actually, there are a large number of views of social pedagogy, all being grounded on different kinds of concepts of man, society, morals, knowledge and the nature of education. A common denominator might be the idea of togetherness of social and educational issues. Social pedagogy brings social considerations into education, and the educational perspective into social affairs. The idea is to make pedagogy “social” and to contribute to social life through educational activities.

### → Prehistory of the idea of social pedagogy

Plato, Aristotle and certain other Greek philosophers in classical antiquity clearly understood that the future of society depends decisively on education. Ethics,



politics and pedagogy formed an organic unity in their socio-philosophical writings. This trinity can be found in the Greek idea of *paideia*, which refers to the progress of culture and social life in every respect. Youth education was fundamentally organised in terms of citizenship education from the point of view of the state's best interests. Although some anthropological roots of social pedagogy can be derived from this understanding, as well as from Christian charity, it may be wrong to define its origins there.

From the historical point of view, the idea of social pedagogy germinated in an active concept of man, as distinct from a fatalistic one. Human history is seen as the result of human doings, and humans are seen as responsible for their temporal destiny and are able to influence it. According to a Western history of ideas, this way of thinking took shape in ancient Greece, was strengthened during the Renaissance and Reformation, and broke through in the proper sense during the Enlightenment.

It may be reasonable to say that the idea of social pedagogy is older than the concept itself. Therefore, it may be more useful to hunt for the origins of social pedagogy in the history of ideas than to make a linguistic analysis. For example, Greek philosophers hardly dealt with the question of underprivileged people. If we come to the conclusion that this element necessarily belongs to the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy, then we should look historically elsewhere than in ancient Greece.

### → Origins of the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy

The early steps towards a theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy from the point of view of relief were taken in its pre-conceptual era by the theorists who paid attention to social misery and saw the importance of education in preventing and alleviating people's social and moral distress. Educational programmes with this kind of socio-pedagogical intention, but without the explicit concept of social pedagogy, were developed, *inter alia*, by Vives, Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Fröbel.

The concept of social pedagogy was used for the first time by the German educationists and schoolmen Karl Mager and Adolph Diesterweg in the middle of the 19th century. For them, social pedagogy was an alternative to an individualistic theory of education focusing on the educational dynamics of individual development. Although Mager and Diesterweg used the concept of social pedagogy in different ways, they both found "individual pedagogy" narrow-minded and emphasised the importance of social aspects in educational research and theory building. Thus, since the very beginning of the concept of social pedagogy, the question has been to find an alternative to the individualistic way of pedagogical thinking. Social pedagogy became a theoretical framework of youth education in which particular attention was paid to the living conditions and social needs of the younger generation. In the German tradition of social pedagogy, the origins of the concept have been interpreted as being connected with modernisation and the birth of industrialism, the working classes and the so-called "social question". The origins of social pedagogy are seen as arising from a need to intermediate educationally the discrepancy between individual autonomy and societal expectations, which occurred with the process of modernisation (Mollenhauer 1959; Reyer 2002; Dollinger 2006). Originally, social pedagogy was a common denominator for all such educational theories that rejected attempts to solve the problem through individualism, and instead of focusing only on the nature of individual development paid attention to

social issues as well. It was a way of pedagogical thinking in which a balance was established between individual emancipation and social integration.

Numerous theories and conceptual systematisations of social pedagogy were produced by the early German theorists at the turn of the 20th century. Conspicuously, the theoretical constructions were based on very different interpretations of the concept. There were several attempts to systematise the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy in the first decades of the 20th century. Already at the end of the 19th century, the following categories were found in the systematisations of the basic idea of social pedagogy (Gottschalk 2005, pp. 46-47):

- contributing to welfare of young people through education;
- strengthening the processes of socialisation;
- increasing educational democracy;
- advancing social and cultural progress;
- analysing and making the societal conditions of education visible; and
- organising educational help for people in social and moral distress.

### → Two main lines

The two main theoretical lines of enquiry in the early history of the concept of social pedagogy in Germany were the ethical-normative one by Paul Natorp and the hermeneutic one by Herman Nohl. Natorp paid particular attention to working-class education, and community and social reforms, whereas Nohl dealt with cultural criticism, the youth movement, youth welfare and organisation, and the professionalisation processes of social work (Niemeyer, Schröer and Böhnisch 1997, p. 11). To date, both schools of thought have influenced the later development of the theoretical self-understanding of social pedagogy. With the term self-understanding, I am concentrating on the idea of social pedagogy understanding its own actions, and thus, this term complements that of self-conception, which I understand to mean how social pedagogy perceives itself. This has been the case in Germany and also in other countries in which the concept of social pedagogy has been adopted.

Thus, social pedagogy came into existence particularly during the transition process from the pre-modern to the modern social order. It represents a modern way of pedagogical thinking dealing with pluralism of lifestyles, individual freedom and social mobility. Since the 1920s, it has been integrated with the early construction of the welfare state. In this context, social pedagogy was professionalised in theory and practice. This was particularly the case in Germany, but also occurred elsewhere, even though the concept was not necessarily in use. In practice, this meant that social matters were addressed through educational means in a modernising society. In the German tradition, Herman Nohl and his colleagues opened the way for professional social pedagogy.

Herman Nohl saw the youth movement as a source of cultural and pedagogical power and energy, which was useful for the development of professional social work and youth welfare (Böhnisch and Schröer 1997, p. 59). For Nohl, youth welfare was a form of pedagogy in terms of social pedagogy based on the ideas of “cultural criticism” and “cultural creation” expressing themselves in the spirit of the youth movement (Böhnisch and Schröer 1997, p. 63). Social pedagogy was understood as a new field of education in which “the youth was introduced as a social, pedagogical and psychological problem” and as a new field of pedagogical and psychological research “with diagnostic and preventive aspirations”

(Dudek 1997, p. 54). It was also inspired by social research, especially early youth sociology (Niemeyer, Schröder and Böhnisch 1997, pp. 30-32). Thus, the professionalisation process of social pedagogy in the 1920s took advantage of both developmental psychology and youth sociology.

In the framework of the process of professionalisation, the concept of social pedagogy began to refer mainly to a professional system of social work, especially a system of social work with children, young people and families. Some interpretations were limited, in particular, to youth issues and youth education (for example, Mollenhauer 1959, 1964). Generally speaking, social pedagogy became a theory and practice of social work including youth work as a special area of social work. It was defined and its history described chiefly in terms of a set of fields of professional action, namely early education, residential care, foster care, social work with families, youth work, etc. Youth work was seen to have a double function in terms of social work and cultural work (Treptow 1993, pp. 230-35). In this context, an interest was also taken in the development of special methods of social pedagogy in terms of youth education and welfare.

### → The era after the Second World War

The social order of post-war society in western Europe since the middle of the 1950s until the 1990s can be characterised in terms of controlled social development. This includes ideas of social planning, the constitutional welfare state, parliamentary democracy, the social market economy and development of human rights. Societies were developed in terms of social security and welfare. Since the 1990s, a new kind of social order, “the second modern”, has been brought about. This has changed the position of youth in society as well as the nature of youth education.

The Nazi era and the Second World War meant “a death blow” to the original humanistic tradition of social pedagogy in Germany. This opened a new chapter in the theoretical self-understanding of social pedagogy. After the Second World War, the original anthropologic-philosophical and humanistic orientation was replaced by a pragmatist one, the concept was connected with the Anglo-American tradition of social work and new methods and techniques were developed on this basis. In some other European countries, the concept of social pedagogy was adopted and developed with country-specific characteristics.

Then, in the 1960s, the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy started to be strongly influenced by the social sciences, especially critical sociology. This “sociologisation” distanced social pedagogy more and more from its philosophic-anthropological origins. Attention was paid to people’s real living conditions and education was introduced in terms of social emancipation. New paradigms came into existence, for example the “everyday life orientation”, “life world orientation” and “subject-orientated” way of thinking developed by Klaus Mollenhauer, Paulo Freire, Herman Giesecke, Hans Thiersch, José Maria Quintana and others. At the same time, the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy fell to pieces. The concept of social pedagogy also gained an increasing foothold outside German-speaking countries.

Since the 1960s many theorists of social pedagogy have underlined the emancipatory nature of social pedagogy. Instead of making “wicked” and “delinquent” people follow the norms of the society by controlling education and “healing” their behavioural disorders, the task of social pedagogy is seen as dealing with the relationship between people and society from the socio-critical perspective

in terms of pointing out the social threats and obstacles of human development, emancipating people from inhuman living conditions and offering protection against them. This has meant a transformation from “defensive” to “offensive” social pedagogy, as Herman Giesecke put it (Giesecke 1973). As was the case of social and educational sciences in the 1970s in general, social pedagogy was theoretically shaped by radical political ideas. Anti-authoritarian and non-oppressive thought took place in socio-pedagogical theory and practice.

### → Social pedagogy in today’s society

The late-modern society seems to require more and more of youth, youth education and the theory of youth education. The late-modern theoretical self-understanding of social pedagogy is closely connected with the sociological knowledge of contemporary social reality. Society is described as “a risk society” and social pedagogy is seen as a helping instrument therein. Social pedagogy has not only taken advantage of sociological analyses but has produced such knowledge by itself as well. The societal reality has been reflected through a pedagogical prism by asking how it challenges people in their everyday life and how they can and must be helped. Different kinds of answers have been produced in theory and practice.

From the point of view of youth work, it is significant that the late-modern social order makes heavy demands on young people in terms of social risks and problems. The original question of social pedagogy about the relationship between individuals and society is increasingly topical. Socio-pedagogical questioning needs to be examined again and again from the point of view of any new kind of societal context. At the beginning of the 21st century, there were attempts to introduce the concept of social pedagogy in the English-speaking space (for example, Hämäläinen 2003; Coussée et al. 2010). The country-specific diversity of the concept has also been documented (Kornbeck and Rosendal Jensen 2009) but not yet systematically analysed in terms of comparative research.

Today’s social order also raises the question about the relationship between youth work and social work. The nature of youth work is increasingly seen through its opportunities to deal with social problems, like youth unemployment, behavioural disorders and young people’s social risks. As a consequence, the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy is increasingly shaped by attempts to intervene and alleviate the social exclusion of young people.

In parallel to the increasing disintegration of the theoretical self-conception of social pedagogy, it has been developed as an academic profession and grown towards an international unity. Professionalisation has led to increasing specialisation in research, education, expertise and working practice. The social complexity of the late-modern society expresses itself as a multiplicity of social and psychosocial problems requiring from social education more and more intellectual, methodological and institutional specialisation. Perhaps this is also the main reason why social pedagogy has increasingly gained a foothold in many countries in the last two decades.

### → The ambiguity of the concept of social pedagogy

From the historical point of view, social pedagogy came into existence as an expression of a new kind of social consciousness in pedagogy. Attention was paid to the fact that education has societal limits, which were reflected in pedagogical theory building. From the socio-historical point of view, social pedagogy came

into existence as a reaction to the new kinds of social problems and increasing social needs caused by industrialisation and the breakdown of social order. All in all, social pedagogy represented a new kind of philosophy of education. In any event, the concept was somehow unclear from the beginning.

Because of “an indisputable heterogeneity of social pedagogy” (Niemeyer, Schröder and Böhnisch 1997, p. 9), it is rather difficult to deal with the concept and decide how to start to study it. From a historical point of view, it comes down to the fact that social pedagogy was originally a German-speaking concept that came into existence and took shape in terms of theories by German philosophers in the 19th century. It was also developed primarily by German theorists during the 20th century. The concept has proved to be ambiguous in terms of interpretations based on different social theories, political interests, ethical values, concepts of man and philosophies of science. In any case, it seems to offer a great deal of room for reflections on and around education, including youth work theory and practice.

It has been claimed that social pedagogy cannot define what it really is (Hamburger 2003, p. 11), although it has also been claimed that it has been very useful to the development of such a theory to be obliged, from the very beginning, to try to justify itself through theory building concerning its inner nature, because the concept does not immediately create a clear image of what it is (Rauschenbach 1991, p. 1). The concept of social pedagogy can be seen as, for example:

- a theory of education in which attention is paid in particular to social issues and, correspondingly, the practice of education in which social issues take a special place;
- a doctrine about the importance of education in social life and development of society;
- a social movement which underlines educational issues in social development;
- a basic principle in the theory of education, a special area of education, or an independent discipline; and
- a system of professional social work aiming at tackling social exclusion through educational means.

From the point of view of the history of ideas, two basic lines in the development and theory of social pedagogy can be identified. The first one emphasises people’s growth in participation, active citizenship and mature membership of society, whilst the second deals with social problems and their prevention, and alleviation of social exclusion. These two lines cross each other in theory and practice. The first one can be called a general theory of education and human growth with a social orientation, whilst the second one is a special theory of education in terms of educationally oriented social work, and social welfare and security. The first one takes advantage of the general theory of education, the second one of the general theory of welfare. In the framework of the first one, youth work is primarily seen as part of educational policy, and in the second as part of social policy.

### → Social pedagogy in terms of educational methods

Along with the process of professionalisation, interests in developing special socio-pedagogical methods and techniques sprung up. The early methodological development of social pedagogy, due to Herman Nohl, was influenced by the German youth movement, which has been characterised by historians as a self-education

movement of young people. The ideas of self-governing and self-education of youth were developed in the theory of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy took theoretical and also methodological advantage of the movements of reform pedagogy based on the idea that you can trust the young people to govern themselves.

Different forms of community-based action took place and were championed in professional social work from the very beginning. Natorp had already underlined the fundamental meaning of community in education. According to him, all education takes place in community and due to this all pedagogy is and should be socially pedagogic in nature, both in theory and in practice. In the Nohlian tradition of social pedagogy, group and community work were adapted and developed as expressions of the youth movement (Böhnisch and Schröer 1997, pp. 65-68). Education in community, through community and for community became a methodological principle.

Beside this, the Nohlian concept of “pedagogical relationship” (*der pädagogische Bezug*) was used in the sense of the idea of a spontaneous and open interaction between the educator and the person to be educated. In every respect, Nohl rejected all kinds of manipulation in pedagogical interaction. He was somehow inspired by psychoanalytical philosophy in interpreting the educational relationship in terms of love and trust. Anyway, there was a tension between a medico-psychiatric orientation in methods and techniques for treating the developmental disorders of a child, and an educative-pedagogical one focusing on the conditions in which a child grows up and his or her educational relationships. Generally speaking, professional social pedagogy was not originally developed as a set of methods and techniques, but as a way of thinking in the field of social education. Instead of methods, a spontaneous, creative and context-sensitive orientation was emphasised. This methodological way of thinking has largely been adopted by later theorists of social pedagogy.

From the point of view of methods of social work, it has been claimed that “as more diverse, extensive and socially meaningful social work has become through the modernising process, so more diffuse, confusing and difficult it is to answer the question about its arsenal of special methods and action repertoire” and “social education (or social work) is no longer outlined as an expression of a special arsenal of methods, no longer reduced to the methodical part of its action” (Rauschenbach, Ortman and Karsten 1993, p. 7). Instead of a method-based way of thinking, the concept of “socio-pedagogical look” (*der sozialpädagogische Blick*) has been introduced. This “socio-pedagogical look” aims to catch the subjective and social aspects in one picture in terms of “life world orientation” (Rauschenbach, Ortman and Karsten 1993, p. 9). This has become a predominant paradigm in German social pedagogy since the 1980s.

### → Social pedagogy as a field of research and theory building

Due to the new kind of pedagogical reflections on childhood and youth since the end of the 18th century, the lives of children and young people have been increasingly influenced by educational aspirations, and youth have become more and more “educationalised” (Dudek 1997, pp. 43-45). Along with the birth of the concept of social pedagogy, the traditional philosophy of education has been influenced by the social sciences and has turned to a new era in terms of the history of the theory and science of education (Reyer 2002, pp. 89-92). Social pedagogy developed as a field of educational research and science in spite of the varied nature of the concept and the diversity of theory building.

In the German discussion, social pedagogy has been introduced as an individual science connected with the corresponding profession. As a science, social pedagogy has been described using terms such as “a historical science”, “an empirical science”, “a discursive science” and “a theoretical science” (Niemeyer 2003, pp. 18-49). It deals both with the history of its theoretical self-understanding and the actual social problems. It is reasonable to introduce it as “an action science” and to stress the point that it is a practical science in the Aristotelian sense. From this point of view, its basic subjects are the processes of human growth through which people gain capacity for life management, participation and emancipation as members of society, together with the pedagogical action needed therein.

It may be reasonable to make a distinction between the theory of social pedagogy and theory in social pedagogy. The theory of social pedagogy is a theory about its inner nature. It is a systematic answer to the question of what social pedagogy is about as a discipline, field of research, professional activity, way of thinking, and social system. Theory in social pedagogy refers to psychological, sociological, educational and other theories and methods which are applied in socio-pedagogical thinking and action. Many of these theories concern human development and people’s living conditions.

### → Contributions to youth work

In theory and in practice, youth work utilises the best of developmental psychology, youth sociology and social pedagogy. Of these, however, only social pedagogy offers a theoretical framework for youth work in terms of an action theory. Both psychology and sociology bring useful knowledge to the field of youth work but this knowledge must be applied to the language of educational and political action. This would be successful through socio-pedagogical questioning and theory building.

Social pedagogy is not a set of methods or simply a professional endeavour. It is rather a philosophy or a way of thinking in which human development and education are considered from the point of view of their social contexts, and social contexts are conceptualised as contexts for human growth. The quality of communities and people’s social relationships is assessed with pedagogical criteria in terms of human growth and social progress. Social pedagogy combines theories and empirical knowledge about youth in their social environments, which are analysed by developmental psychology and youth sociology using ethical values concerning the individual and the social aims of youth education.

In real life, developmental psychology, youth sociology and social pedagogy contribute to youth work as a mixed whole. Psychology and sociology gain political acceptance through practical contributions to youth work and in socio-pedagogical applications. Through their actions regarding the construction of educational solutions to the various social and psychosocial problems of young people, they are also significantly crossing over into the mandate of pedagogy. Anyway, social pedagogy contributes, from the very beginning, as a science of action. It brings forth action-orientated philosophies and concepts, for example the “everyday-orientated” paradigm of social pedagogy by Hans Thiersch and the “subject-orientated” paradigm of youth work by Albert Scherr.

Developmental psychology (studying youth as a life phase) and youth sociology (studying youth as a social category) are predominant in youth work theories worldwide, whereas social pedagogy (studying youth in terms of pedagogical reflection) is a special German tradition, although the concept has been little by

little adopted in other countries as well. As a field of research and theory building, social pedagogy offers an opportunity to examine youth and youth work in terms of questioning, which combines social problems with pedagogical questions. Psychological, sociological and pedagogical theories of youth conceptualise the relationship between a person and society in different ways. The nature, origins and mechanisms of social problems are viewed more or less as person- or society-oriented, as are the intervention strategies. The boundaries that distinguish between these are not between the disciplines *per se*, but rather concern the theories within the disciplines. Some tensions are also connected to different political interests in terms of social criticism, politicking, civics and social ideologies.

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# History of European youth policies and questions for the future

*Lasse Siurala*

## → The vulnerable youth field

In *The history of youth work – Relevance for today's youth work policy*, Griet Verschelden et al. (2009) argue that youth work is in identity crisis: youth work has not been able to define its specificity in terms of target groups, aims, methodology and it has not shown its effectiveness. The authors maintain that the identity crisis is a result of a historical development of youth work through a divided service structure. NGO activities have gained recognition but reach selectively better-off youth. At the same time, open youth work has wider reach, but has not been able to provide proof of positive pedagogical results. The argument for NGO activities is that they constitute an important non-formal learning context for social skills and competences. However, the authors suggest it could be the effect of selection: active and able young people join organisations and become its active members. Open youth work (youth centres) attract disadvantaged youth but, without proper pedagogical intervention, appear to risk becoming "academies of crime". The authors call this "the accessibility paradox" because "the work that works is not accessible, the accessible work does not work" (Verschelden et al. 2009, p. 151). The

study has led to an important reflection: What is the status of youth work today? Where has it come from? Where is it going to? It raises very basic existential questions. Why youth work? What is it for “ordinary youth”? Is it a learning context? What is its identity?

### → Identity crisis of youth work

The reaction of the youth field to this divide and identity crisis has roughly been to (1) further support and strengthen NGO-based youth work, (2) develop targeted methods of youth integration and (3) to promote the recognition of non-formal learning.

Increasing numbers of governments have enacted youth laws with an emphasis on the importance and proper funding of youth NGOs. And, even if there is a European trend of diminishing interest of young people in youth organisations, and political youth organisations, in particular, many municipalities have a vivid and diversified scene of youth organisations and action groups. Youth organisations, both their national and international bodies, have successfully raised youth issues on political agendas and have developed marked negotiation structures and practices with national governments and international organisations like the Council of Europe (“co-management”) and European Union (“structural dialogue”). In this sense, youth organisations have legitimised themselves as “the voice of youth”. At the local level, the youth policy principle is to first support youth organisations to organise activities for young people and, second, to organise municipal or public youth services. This order of preference authorises NGO work as “primary” youth work. Thus, there has been development, but many basic issues which erode the identity and credibility of the field still remain: the hierarchy of recognition of youth work forms and the narrow mandate of NGOs to represent youth.

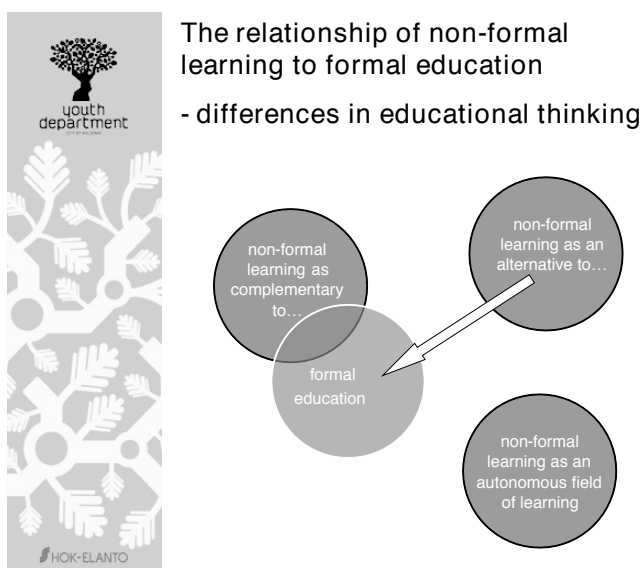
Despite the criticism that open youth work is unable to deal with youth with problems, and that youth centres rather appear as “academies of crime”, the field has been able to develop targeted methods of youth integration. Street work has become an established working method in youth and social work, and has successfully explored the Internet as a means to reach youth needing support. Social youth workers have developed co-operation with the school. Adventure education seems to expand to a pedagogy promoting environmental consciousness, while it has also developed new methods like urban adventure education. Other success stories in targeted youth include inter-professional teams, typically with the social and health sectors. Interdisciplinary collaboration works with school dropouts, school-leavers, unemployed youth, youth with aggressive behaviour and multi-problem youth to motivate and support them for better life trajectories. During the spectacular rise of youth unemployment in the 1970s and 1980s, youth workers in Finland created “youth workshops” (inspired by the Danish production schools) aimed at young people who had not found their place in vocational or university education. Empirical studies indicate that the workshops, today available in most municipalities in Finland, have been one of the most successful measures in career development and labour market integration of young people. A recent youth act aims at strengthening youth workshops through support to street workers and other support systems.

The above examples of targeted youth work indicate that the pedagogical competences of youth workers have become more transparent and the field has gained recognition. Youth workers are very welcomed partners in inter-professional collaboration.

The problem has been to establish a demarcation line between youth work and social work. The risk has been merging youth work into social work – not only in the UK, but elsewhere as well – with the threat of youth work losing its ethos, identity and independence. A concomitant risk is that youth work loses its role as a general welfare service for all young people. Instead, youth work becomes a compilation of youth at risk projects.

It has been a long-standing pursuit of the European youth field, the international organisations, in particular, to promote the recognition, formalisation and transparency of non-formal learning and its better links to formal education. How to better assess its learning outcomes, how to develop non-formal learning curricula, how to integrate it into existing formal education curricula and how employers, education institutions and public opinion are to see non-formal learning as a serious and useful type of learning are all pertinent questions.

**Figure 1: The relationship of non-formal learning to formal education – differences in educational thinking**



The basic strategy seems to be that linking non-formal learning to formal education will revive the practice-based and learner-centred learning approach. Some positive initiatives have emerged, but many basic problems remain. First, there is a discrepancy between rhetoric and reality: there are no major advancements in links between the two learning approaches. Second, the relationship between non-formal learning and formal education may be seen as problematic (see Figure 1). Even if the dominant rhetoric is to better integrate non-formal learning into formal education (complementary relationship), critical voices say that formalisation of non-formal learning endangers its voluntary nature and emancipatory essence. Critical educationalists have even claimed that non-formal learning has become commodified – it has become a popular product in experiential tourism, staff training and adventure education – to the extent that it has become a decontextualised, ahistorical and apolitical activity. In this sense, non-formal learning, as an autonomous field of learning, should stay “at arm’s length” from formal education. Thirdly, we have the critical educationalists who maintain that formal education is

in crisis and at the end of its path, and that it should be replaced by a better alternative – a non-formal learning approach. Along these lines, Hager and Halliday (2009, p. 248) have recently argued for the need of a “Copernican revolution” in educational approaches.

To conclude, historically rooted issues like division of the youth field, problems of access, and demonstrable usefulness and the resulting crises of identity have been addressed through policy initiatives and methodological development. However, to have a solid identity, the youth field should dissolve its internal hierarchies and agree on a fair representation of youth, and integrate new working methods as a core competence of an independent youth field. Another identity issue is to strengthen the pedagogical essence of non-formal learning, promote its transparency and create linkages on its own terms. A specificity of non-formal learning is that it is an efficient way to develop social, political and moral identities and competencies, and to empower (young people) to take action, in short, to promote active citizenship.

### → Identity crisis of youth policy

One of the youth work credos is “youth as a totality”. It means that youth workers are proud of their comprehensive approach to youth. Unlike other professionals they do not divide people up according to the competences of their respective organisation. Youth workers look at young people as a whole. A youth worker becomes an expert in understanding young people as a unique person consisting of a large variety of life experiences and expectations. The logic is that only through understanding the entire life situation, can one provide feasible advice or support. Likewise, a youth information and counselling centre is a place where young people can ask anything. There are no other similar public services.

This individual-level concern of youth as a totality is transformed into a larger social concern through the concept of “comprehensive youth policy” or “integrated youth policy”. It can be defined as “a conscious and structured cross-sectoral policy to co-operate with other sectors and co-ordinate services for youth involving young people themselves in the process” (Siurala 2006, p. 12). As a rule it is assumed that it is the youth sector that is responsible for the co-ordination. The youth sector takes the responsibility of looking at young people’s living conditions and aspirations as a totality. This is an effort to establish an identity for youth work – that of the co-ordinating expert of youth affairs.

Integrated youth policy plans and surveys – national and local – have quite a long history dating back to the golden era of social planning of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, in Finland the concept of integrated youth policy plans was launched by Kari Rantalaiho in 1969 (“Youth policies for the 1970s”) and Juha Vartola who drafted in 1971 a guide to local integrated youth policy plans. It was followed by nearly a hundred municipal integrated youth policy plans during the subsequent decades.

According to a follow-up study, very few of them were actually used as an efficient implementation tool. “Experience from some countries suggests that youth policy plans have promoted the visibility of the youth sector and youth affairs across other sectors, but that it has been difficult to commit the other sectors to actually implement the proposed actions” (Siurala 2006, p. 36).

In 1995, the Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) of the Council of Europe decided, on the proposal of Finland, to start running national youth policy reviews – with

Finland as the first country to be reviewed in 1997. Since then, 16 surveys have been carried out. No studies on the actual impact of the surveys exist. Howard Williamson has authored two follow-up reports based on the survey documents themselves, some questionnaires and his experience as rapporteur to many of the reports of the international evaluation teams set up by the Council of Europe. One of his overall conclusions is that: "What is written in national reports may bear little relation to practice on the ground" (Williamson 2008, p. 55). Williamson's words signal two things. First, the use of the word "may" indicates that we indeed do not have enough research data to arrive at that conclusion, and, two, there is a justified view that national reports have not trickled down that well.

In general, the main reasons for the failures in integrated policy plans seem to be that: (1) they have been too global and too abstract, (2) the youth sector as the process owner within the administration (of the state or the municipality) has been too insignificant to drive the processes through, (3) the involvement of stake-holders (departments, politicians, young people) has been insufficient and (4) the links to budgetary processes and to government/city council priority programmes have been missing.

To conclude, the youth field has tried to consolidate its policy identity through the concept of integrated youth policy. However, the strategy has not been too successful because of implementation problems.

### → Identity crises of the youth field

The specificity, or a crucial element of the identity, of the youth field is "the golden triangle" of youth research, youth policy and youth work. After the Second World War, interest in youth research increased. The Council of Europe commissioned an evaluation study on youth research carried out between 1960 and 1970 (Kreutz 1973). The study concludes: "The assumption that the central social function of adolescent research was and is the legitimization of political decisions and measures already taken adequately explains the reason for the [bad] condition of this research as revealed empirically" (ibid., p. 129). Thus, historically, youth research has been closely, or, too closely, related to youth policy decisions and measures.

In 1972 the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation were founded within the Council of Europe. "Youth" meant "youth organisations". The 1970s and 1980s were NGO times. Consequently, as Peter Lauritzen notes (Milmeister and Williamson 2006, p. 15), researchers and experts were practically out, because "... there are no better experts on young people, than young people themselves ... as the zeitgeist of post-'68 would tell us". Since then, NGOs have been in charge of the Council's youth agenda.

The governments became stronger in the 1980s when the ad hoc committee (CHJE) became a Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). Within the co-managed structure of the Council's youth field, the governments became the balancing power to the youth organisations. The CDEJ also started to look favourably at new partners. Youth research featured on the agenda of the 1st Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in 1985. The final text mentioned "research and documentation on youth issues" (Council of Europe 1988, p. 130), recommended "securing information exchange between youth research workers and research facilities (ibid., p. 134) and the attached medium-term plan mentioned "initiation of a network of co-operation amongst youth workers in Europe on research issues"

(*ibid.*, p. 151). Note the idea of networking youth workers on youth research, but not networking researchers on youth work issues. However, the pressures to create networks also with youth researchers became stronger. First, the CDEJ mandated the first Expert Committee on Youth Research, which gathered prominent youth researchers and also some government and NGO representatives. Second, the 2nd Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth (Oslo, April 1988), the theme of which was “Strategies for European youth policies in the approach to the year 2000”, consisted of a presentation by the Finnish Minister for Culture, Anna-Liisa Piipari, on strengthening the role of youth research in the Council of Europe’s youth field. The presentation was commissioned by the CDEJ.

Through this strong political support, research co-operation gradually developed into a regular meeting of youth research correspondents reporting back to the CDEJ and expanding its activities through the programmes of the two youth centres leading eventually to the first partnership agreement with the European Commission in 1999.

The magic triangle – policy, practice and research – came together. This was the short history. A more detailed history is needed to describe how the current roles, mandates and power positions of the corners of the triangle were constituted after 1972. But, how does the triangle work today? Is it a harmonious network promoting joint interests or a battlefield of social closures maximising each other’s own advantage at the expense of others? It was the famous Romanian youth researcher Fred Mahler who, back in the 1980s, developed the concept “Juventology” to refer to a global plan for young people to participate in everything that concerns them backed up by an equally global knowledge production system (Mahler 1982). There was a strong demand for youth policy to become, as it is called today, ‘evidence-based policy’. But, as Lynne Chisholm has said, it is not realistic to expect policy to be stringently research-based, but rather to expect the research to have the capacity to inform policy (Milmeister and Williamson 2006, p. 28). Even so, are policy makers, youth workers and youth organisations using research reports or youth researchers when designing their policies? Or, are youth researchers working in close co-operation with youth workers and policy makers in picking up problems to study and in drafting the research plan? Are the corners of the triangle linked?

Lynne Chisholm has argued (Milmeister and Williamson 2006, pp. 28-29) that researchers, policy makers and practitioners inhabit different normative worlds (because of the different logics of their actions). Particularly problematic is the relationship between researchers and practitioners, because “they inhabit different cultural spaces ... they use mutually largely incomprehensible languages and they possess different kinds of skills and competences – which each value highly in comparison with others.” Does this mean that everyone only focuses on their own particular interests? Instead of involving themselves in open interaction and co-operation, international youth organisations and their lobby groups are criticised for only repeating old mantras and claiming mandates for being the main representative and knowledge producer of youth – which they do not have. Some disapprove of the way the researchers define research problems, gather data and interpret them without really communicating with practitioners or taking them on board, and claim sole authority over knowledge production – which they cannot do either. Youth policy makers at ministry level can have very distant links to grass-roots youth work and impose, often without sufficient dialogue, objectives and tasks which the local level feel are unrealistic and off the point. And finally, at the point of service, youth workers are often so focused on traditional methods

of face-to-face encounter with the young people, that they seem to be unable to renew their working methods according to youth policy priorities or research results. It is feasible to suggest that in practice the golden triangle does not live up to its promise. Rather, the field appears as a conglomeration of “social closures”. Following Max Weber the term “social closures” was used by Frank Parkin (1979) to refer to the action of social groups that restrict entry and exclude benefit to those outside the group in order to maximise their own advantage.

Considering the differences and conflicting interests between research, policy and practice, it is difficult to see how the golden triangle could build joint identities, objectives and practices.

The question may be raised of whether the youth field consists of social closures which focus on uncompromising advocacy and lobbying, concentrate in defending their professional interests and criteria, or are unable to look beyond their existing practices or disciplinary clichés.

### → **Hidebound<sup>53</sup> concepts and structures?**

As was noted above, youth organisations have been able to establish a strong position in the EU and Council of Europe. At the national level, umbrella organisations of youth organisations (national youth councils) are often powerful national lobbyists. In municipalities, political youth organisations have their links to local politicians to see to it that the municipality supports their activities. Youth researchers do not have similar status or lobby structures. Researchers mainly operate through their research projects and professional organisations. The youth research community traditionally has a representative in the Council’s co-managed bodies, which offers only limited possibilities of influence.

Another absent voice is municipal youth work, which in varying degrees exists in most European countries. In many countries municipal youth work is financed through local taxes. In Finland, for example, only about 4% of the income of municipal youth work comes from the state. Consequently, governments do not have a strong mandate to represent municipal youth work. Secondly, due to the lack of proper organisational links between municipal youth work and the respective ministry, the voice of youth work is not audible in the design of international youth policies.

In the Finnish case, the main youth work service provider is municipal youth work. In Finland, there are 3 400 municipal youth workers. A good part of the about 45 000 professional youth workers in Germany and the 120 000 *animateurs socioculturels* and the 55 000 *éducateurs spécialisés* in France work for the public sector. However, despite the volume of municipal youth work, it is almost completely invisible in the decision-making bodies and consultative processes of the youth structures of international organisations, like the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Another nearly absent voice is that of organisations providing services for young people, but which are not run by young people themselves. Somehow, an extremely well-organised elite of traditional youth organisations has been able to keep the power and voice

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53. Hidebound = “keeping to outdated traditions, rather than changing”.



of youth for itself.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the key concepts and structures adopted by these bodies determine accepted ways of doing youth work and keep us from seeing alternative approaches.

### → From “youth participation” to “youth agency”

The argument for youth NGOs to echo and represent the voice of youth is based, first, on the credo of 1968 that “there are no better experts on young people, than young people themselves” and, second, on the fact that youth organisations form the only democratically organised representation structure of young people. As a consequence, youth participation can only take place through youth organisations. However, questions may be raised. How can youth organisations represent youth when only 5-20% of young people belong to them and even fewer are active participants? How can they represent young people in general as their memberships seem selective? As young people are turning towards new and varying forms of expressing their political identities, how is it that the increasingly outdated forms (formal organisations) continue the hegemony of the voice of youth? Why are not the knowledge of youth researchers, adults working with youth or professional youth workers relevant to the development of the youth field?

True, the Council of Europe’s practice of “co-management” in the youth sector, through which representatives of governments and youth organisations decide together on the budget and activities, is an inspirational model for modern participatory management. But, at the same time, many voices are not heard, a lot of expertise is left outside and a good part of what is actually happening in the youth scene is simply not captured.

True, the 1968 zeitgeist launched the idea that “there are no better experts on young people, than young people themselves” and that the 1st Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in 1985 was entitled: “Participation of young people in society”, dominating European youth policy texts ever since. But has the time come to have a critical look at the term?

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54. An example of one of the strategies to hang onto power: in 1998 the Committee of Ministers (the highest decision-making body of Council of Europe) was not satisfied with the strong dominance of the European Youth Forum within the youth sector and adopted new statutes for it. The main aim was to open the youth field to “new realities of youth and youth work in Europe”. One effect was to introduce “new partners” to the previous European Youth Forum-dominated decision-making bodies. New partners referred to networks and youth NGOs that were not members of the European Youth Forum, together with researchers. The Council’s youth body called the Advisory Council now consists of 20 representatives nominated by the EYF and 10 new partners nominated by the Secretariat. How did it work out?

To start with, the EYF could continue dominating the body as it already controlled two thirds of its representation. Second, the new partners were inexperienced and poorly prepared, while the EYF had paid staff and specific committees and meetings in Brussels to arrive fully prepared at Strasbourg. Another example is the fact that the Advisory Council decided – against the wishes of the Secretariat and “a strong recommendation” from the Council’s legal adviser – to adopt an age limit of 35 in order to be elected to the bureau or any other working groups of the Advisory Council. Through this decision, a large number and the most experienced part of the new partners were ruled out of all key positions. At the same time, the age limit created a categorisation of members into two groups: the real youth representatives and the second-rate youth representatives.

The expression “youth participation” has become a youth policy tag word, an untouchable truism. Can anybody be against youth participation? Can one imagine an alternative to it? The advantage of using political tag words is that they are so general, that you are not obliged to promise anything concrete. Promoting youth participation in international recommendations and declarations sounds good but does not oblige anyone to do anything. Youth participation as an expression is in that sense decontextualised. But, paradoxically, at the same time as youth participation has become too abstract it has also become too concrete. In the practice of youth work, youth participation has come to denote formal participation structures within representative democracy: school councils, municipal youth councils, youth parliaments, youth hearings, etc. As youth participation comes with these concrete signifiers, it creates a dichotomy of what is and what is not participation. In municipalities, youth participation is a youth council: as soon as the mayor has established a youth council in his city, he has solved young people’s participation problems. No complementary or alternative actions to promote the expression of youth citizenship are needed, or sometimes even tolerated.

UP2YOUTH (2009), a large EU-funded research project consisting of prominent European youth researchers, also raises this issue, first, by pointing out that there is “the obvious mismatch between institutional expectations of how young people should participate and young people’s actual activities and priorities” (ibid., p. 121). The authors continue to discuss “the actual activities”, which appear unconventional: “We suggest to interpret young people’s choices and actions not as non-participation but as a sign of a changing meaning of citizenship and participation as regards both forms and content” (ibid., p. 111). The study recommends “accepting a diversity of conceptual and actual types of participation and overcoming the dominant dichotomies of what is and what is not participation ... because different types of participation hold the key to understanding the changing meaning of participation – including the changing meaning of politics, collectivism and public space – in late modernity” (ibid., p. 126).

Following this advice, the term “promoting youth participation” should perhaps be replaced by a new term to cover new and emerging forms of youth involvement and to stimulate our thinking on youth action and its support structures – how about: “providing space for youth agency”? One may ask why change a well-branded political tag word into incomprehensible sociological jargon? Because “youth agency” is a contextualised and open term. It is linked to structural constraints, individual biographies – the myriad ways young people negotiate and act out their future through the present. At the same time, it opens our eyes to see new roles for youth work; celebrating the variance of grass-roots action, linking with virtual and other social communities, involving in collaborative practice other sectors of the public administration and young people, working for social justice, providing opportunities for negotiating the future, creating broader bases of knowledge and practice for youth policy making, and the like.

In sum, what is needed is a modernisation of existing youth policy structures and management models to better reflect the variance of actors in the youth field and to rethink the basic concepts of youth work and youth policy – and revise the language that goes with them – to better reflect what is happening in the youth scene.

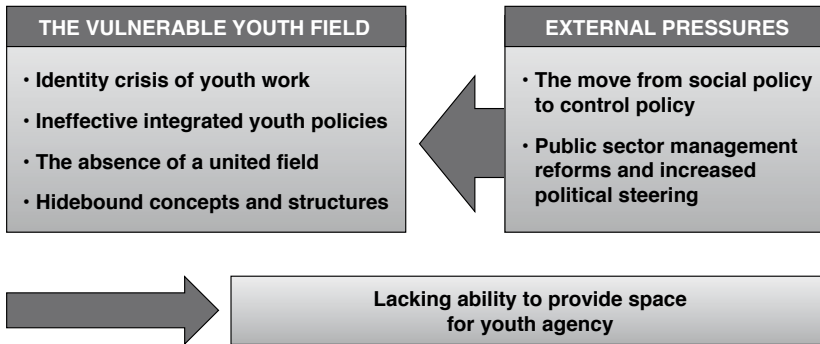
### → Structural pressures

All of the above, (1) the historically developed identity crises of youth work, (2) the failure to promote the role of “the co-ordinating youth expert” through integrated

youth policies, (3) the absence of a coherent youth field and (4) hidebound concepts and structures, have made youth work vulnerable in resisting external structural pressures. These include the following two policy trends:

- the move from “social policy” to “control policy”:
  - policies focusing on “integration problems” and “control” rather than “space for identity development” and “emancipation”;
- public sector management reforms and increased political steering:
  - reduction of public and social welfare services;
  - efficiently cascading down government policies;
  - top-down organisational reforms under banners such as “life-career politics” and “joined-up services”;
  - client (youth) segmentation analysis;
  - quality assessment (auditing and self-assessment), measurable outcomes (indicators, statistics, studies), reports and studies on client satisfaction;
  - improving efficiency of management and service delivery (strategy maps, balanced scorecard, results-based pay systems, quality management, etc.).

**Figure 2: The vulnerable youth field under external pressures**



During the past 25 years, the wave of public management reforms has argued for reduction of public expenditure, increasing responsiveness to citizens, building networks and partnerships and, most importantly, improving performance and accountability through private sector management measures. There are people who say that these methods “are not for the youth field” while others maintain that in terms of management “the youth field is not essentially different from any other field”. Organisations in the youth field (public, third sector and private) face changes and need strategic management techniques, which “new public management” is essentially about. Properly used, many of these and the quality management methods are useful for youth administration (for more details, see Siurala 2006).

Problems may arise when quality assessment is used as a means of control rather than as a means of development. The expectation of measurable outcomes runs the risks of formalisation and setting-up of concretised objectives that threaten innovation, creativity and adaptation. Furthermore, new public management drives service providers to better performance. Performance indicators like statistics on visits, events, positive customer feedback and lower production costs should show favourable development. The negative element of this trend is that youth workers start to organise activities that reach masses and often are what Bernard Schoeb has called “fun cultures”. The chase after effectiveness leads to a decrease in quality. To

cut costs, partnerships are established with the private sector, which often means increased influence from commercial youth cultures. All this tends to have a negative effect on the quality of youth work.

To conclude, internally strong and coherent organisations can resist external pressures, or find flexible ways to react to them. The youth field – which seems to be lacking a clear and shared understanding of its ethos, pedagogy, methods and policy objectives, which is internally divided and cannot defend the field as a joint effort, which is still looking for an efficient way to run comprehensive youth policies, and which has not modified its structures and concepts to reflect changes in its operational environment – has had problems to adapt to external changes in social policy thinking, management reforms and political interventions.

The main objective of youth work and youth policy, providing space for youth agency, has been far too neglected.

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# From social education to positive youth development

Tony Taylor

## → Introduction

In March 2009 an open letter, “In defence of youth work”, was circulated at *Youth and Policy’s* Conference on the History of Youth and Community Work. Its sweeping and controversial condemnation of the plight of English youth work began:

*Thirty years ago Youth Work aspired to a special relationship with young people. It wanted to meet them on their terms. It claimed to be on their side. Three decades later Youth Work is close to abandoning this distinctive commitment. Today it accepts the State’s terms. It sides with the State’s agenda. Perhaps we exaggerate, but a profound change has taken place.*

Now the argument that a voluntary, person-centred and open-ended youth work practice was being suffocated in particular by the imposed instrumental demands of New Labour was hardly original. Tony Jeffs was warning us over a decade ago that the Blair administration was likely to press the accelerator of increasing authoritarianism within education rather than put a brake on it (1998, p. 57). More recently, Bernard Davies, in an insightful account of the evolution of a distinctive youth work practice in the UK, argues that its definition, “deeply rooted historically and widely embraced is not

one that our most influential policy makers want to hear – least of all implement” (Davies 2009, p. 64). However, it took the implosion of neo-liberal free market economics in late 2008, seen optimistically by some as the end of the age of greed, to spark a collective response from below, visible as the In Defence of Youth Work campaign at [www.indefenceofyouthwork.org.uk](http://www.indefenceofyouthwork.org.uk). In this chapter, I will delve back as far as the 1960 Albemarle Report to shed light on how the impasse has been reached, specifically within the English context. This will provide a historical backcloth to my argument that a progressive commitment, however flawed and fragile, to the nurturing of active young citizens capable of both governing and being governed has been usurped by a regressive desire to manufacture young people into compliant and conformist consumers. Drawing at times on my own experience, I shall trace the twists and turns of youth work’s allegiance to the much used and abused concept of social education and the present danger of it (or its successors such as informal education) being dismissed from the agenda entirely to be replaced by the social engineering at the heart of Positive Youth Development.

I have divided the last 50 years roughly into four periods. Within each of these, I shall address the intertwining of the following questions:

- What is the state’s view of youth work? To what extent can we identify a clarity or otherwise of policy?
- What is the rhetoric and/or theory informing the training and management of youth workers?
- What is the discernible impact of policy, rhetoric and theory upon youth workers’ relationships with young people?
- And what has been the significance or otherwise of youth work’s engagement with the political parties, especially the Labour Party, now banished into opposition after 13 years in power?

### → 1960-75 – the optimism crumbles

At the end of the 1950s the economic and political mood in Britain remained optimistic, caught in the Conservative Party slogan, “you’ve never had it so good”. The consensus was that a judicious mix of public services, symbolised by the welfare state, and a sensibly regulated market had resolved the contradictions of capitalism. The state did not perceive young people as deficient in skills. Rather the worry was one of motivation and alienation. Moral panics reflecting fears about the generation gap erupted around the spectre of tough “Teddy boys” and dissolute “beatniks”. The state was concerned that young people did not waste the seemingly endless opportunities on offer. The Albemarle Report responded to the supposed dilemmas confidently with expansionist proposals for the informal world of youth work:

- setting in motion an unprecedented building programme of youth centres;
- founding the national college to train and professionalise a full-time cohort of youth leaders;
- combining these with a desire to strengthen the relationship between the voluntary sector and the burgeoning professional state sector, concerned that their differing but complementary contributions should be mutually recognised.

The Conservatives and Labour backed these developments as being in harmony with the spirit of the post-war pluralist consensus.

Reflecting this pluralism and its largely positive view of young people’s abilities, the training approach pursued at the new college emphasised active and experiential

learning, non-directive and non-judgmental approaches (Ewen 1972). A cadre of professional youth workers emerged, guided by an emphasis on method, striving to be technicians in human relations. This perspective was deepened by Davies and Gibson (1967) through their introduction of the concept of social education, interpreted as an increasing consciousness of one's self on an uneven and uncertain journey to social maturity. Reading between the lines they were developing a critique at odds with the charade of ideological neutrality claimed by many in the fledgling profession. For Davies and Gibson, social education was a person-centred, contradictory process, which questioned youth work's dominant tradition of social adjustment to the status quo. This said, the rhetoric and theory of the period was weak on power relations, lacking any grasp of the significance, for example, of class, gender or race.

In 1969 the Milson-Fairbairn Report's attempt to extend the definition of social education further in underlining "the critical involvement of young people in a changing society" (DES 1969) fell on barren ground. Its proposals were at odds with increasing ruling class anxiety as the post-war settlement began to crumble under the weight of oil prices and rising popular unrest. Both Tory and Labour governments declined to support its rationale. Whilst within youth work itself the report's ambition to go beyond the individualist character of social education, to raise the question of youth within the community, served to inspire, confuse and alienate the diversity of those engaged with young people.

For meanwhile on the ground the deep-rooted, character-building tradition within youth work was distinctly unimpressed. An alliance of paid workers and volunteers resisted, stubbornly and effectively, the introduction of the lax notions of youth-centredness. The collision between tradition and trendiness, as one of my sceptical colleagues put it, was expressed in everyday disputes about swearing, about whether young people should be banned from the youth club. To add to the confusion, the ambivalence towards a questioning form of social education was not down to the reactionary responses of supposedly ignorant part-timers and volunteers. In the authority where I worked, all of the half dozen workers or officers trained at the national college were quick to deny the non-directive creed when challenged by the local councillors or their hierarchical superiors.

As for my question about the relationship of workers to the political parties, it seems irrelevant in this period. The common-sense agreement was that political affiliation was a private matter. Indeed, it was not deemed professional to allow politics to intrude. Without doubt this naive equation of "party politics equals politics" was widely shared, but it reflected also the lack of debate about "politics as power" in the training of the post-Albemarle vanguard of full-time professionals.

### → 1976-90 – politics from above and below

A minority Labour government had little time to spare for thinking about youth. Its traumatic reign ended in the chaotic "winter of discontent" as workers refused to co-operate with its austerity measures. In its wake, neo-liberalism with its fetishism of the free market and its distrust of the state surfaced in its initial Thatcherite guise. Piece by piece, the Conservative government put together an increasingly coherent, if always contradictory national youth policy, intervening on the basis of a populist authoritarianism in schooling, employment, welfare and justice (Davies 1986). Within this scenario, youth work itself was spurned as a site of serious state intervention. Thus, the 1982 Thompson Report's failure to jettison a liberal commitment to the whole young person in favour of the shift to behaviourism saw



it shelved. Such was the government's distrust and distaste for what it saw as a refuge of permissiveness that it sought to bypass or colonise youth work through an early and significant quango, the Manpower Services Commission. A host of Youth Training Schemes proliferated. The very concept of social education was under attack from a narrower notion of social and life-skills training. This assault was eloquently criticised (Davies 1979) and resisted. I declaimed that the government was intent on nothing less than the behavioural modification of the young proletariat (Taylor 1981). The Community and Youth Workers Union fought against attempts both to reduce workers' wages and conditions and to undermine the social-democratic ideological base of professional youth work. For the time being, the contest ended in a truce.

In the background, youth work training was in turmoil. The growing unease reflected a feeling that its perspective was white, male and behind the times. By the mid-1980s an infusion of women and black lecturers had begun to alter the outlook of the training agencies. Indeed, by the end of the decade, an anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory (AOP/ADP) analysis of practice had achieved a contradictory hegemony. This success was reflected in the emergence of the critical academic journal *Youth and Policy*; in the determination of Jeffs and Smith (1987) to puncture youth work's anti-theoreticism; in Val Carpenter's (1986) avowal of independent girls' work, together with the seminal exploration of the experience of black youth by Gus John (1981). Under the searchlight of analyses informed by feminist, anti-racist and even socialist theory, social education was found wanting. By the end of the decade, Smith was suggesting that it was no more than a rhetorical device, a useless tool, whilst I was arguing for its redundancy, its replacement by the notion of political education.

Whilst to talk of political education was certainly a step too far, we have to explain why both the theory and training informing the route to full-time status became left-wing in its orientation during a period when the right-wing became evermore ascendant. The answer is to be found below in the social movements of the late 1970s. From within these vibrant, if short-lived settings, politicised activists entered youth work. Their intent was to radicalise practice, symbolised by the rise of autonomous work with young women, black youth, gay and lesbian, and disabled young people. Faced with this convulsion, youth work theory and training had to run to catch up with the prefigurative, oppositional work emerging on the ground, seeking to marry its liberalism with the rising radicalism.

Inevitably, the world of practice was riddled with even more tension, highlighted in a major piece of research into the state of part-time youth work training, which mistakenly supposed that the content of training mirrored the reality of practice. The author, Steve Butters (1978), claimed that the traditional character-building model had been overtaken by the social education repertoire (SER) – a mix of personal awareness, community development and institutional reform. However, in his view, the SER itself had to be overthrown by a radical paradigm, within which young people themselves were transformed into a vanguard leading the struggle against oppression. The analysis was incisive, yet skewed. However, its use in the National Youth Bureau's Enfranchisement project (1985) illuminated the contested nature of youth work practice. Utilising an exercise within which workers positioned themselves according to their ideological allegiance, the project's workers, Andy Smart and Marion Leigh, exposed the plurality of conflicting perspectives that were out there, alive and kicking. The emerging contradiction was that, although a radical interpretation of youth work was the dominant voice at a rhetorical level and had supported imaginative pockets of practice, a conformist view of work with young people was still hugely influential.

These are simply to give a flavour of these internal conflicts from my own experience in a number of English authorities:

- the struggle to have girls work accepted in Wigan split the youth service;
- in Leicester there was a tense relationship in the mid-1980s between independent Black young people's projects born out of the community, staffed by local unqualified workers and a professional Community Education Service, perceived as institutionally racist; and
- in Derbyshire in the late 1980s, I came closest myself as a manager to being incorporated into an imposition of the anti-oppressive agenda, to the detriment of a democratic dialogue with both workers and young people alike.

This reference to the dangers of foisting from above a supposedly emancipatory practice takes us to the question of youth work's relationship to the Labour Party across this period. We have mentioned earlier the transfusion into the work of activists from the social movements. Within this motley crew, there was ambiguity regarding the Labour Party and the trade unions. However, sufficient were in support of the struggle to establish women's and Black sections in the labour movement as a whole. This was reflected within youth work by the metamorphosis of the Community and Youth Service Association into the Community and Youth Workers Union (CYWU) with a women's caucus in the forefront of the change. Implicit in the activities of many of these youth work activists was a hope that a genuinely socialist Labour Party would be in the interests of young people and the work. This belief did not lead necessarily to membership of the party, but it did inspire workers to gravitate towards the municipal socialist councils of the early and mid-1980s, for example, the Greater London Council, Sheffield and Derbyshire. These islands of "socialism" were seen as places where freedom of expression and support would be forthcoming.

However, as the decade drew to a close, the radical insurgents within youth work were on the retreat in common with the left as a whole. The defeat of the miners in 1985 had devastated the Labour movement. The maverick "socialist" councils losing both confidence and finance, abandoned being refuges of radicalism, especially as the Labour Party itself began the process of reinventing itself as a party of the centre. Faced by similar pressures, the social movements were abandoning their autonomy, taking the grants and seeing their leaders recuperated by the state (Shukra 1998).

Increasingly across these years, a prescriptive right-wing agenda nationally was matched by an imposed left-wing agenda locally. "Social education" as a term lost its resonance. The radical praxis, which had sought to supersede it, forgot its roots in diversity and critical tolerance. Increasingly issue-based and fractured, it took on an authoritarian character. Failing to win hearts and minds, some of its advocates adopted a managerial approach, looking to insist that their agenda be met.

### → 1990-97 – the market and managerialism prevail

As the neo-liberal desire to introduce the discourse of the market into all corners of our existence continued apace, the Conservative government remained equivocal about youth work. Turning a little of its attention to this uncertainty, it called a series of ministerial conferences, the first in 1991 in Birmingham. The Tories hoped to persuade the disparate elements within youth work to agree a core curriculum, against which performance could be measured. In perhaps its last moment of collective solidarity, an alliance of the voluntary and state sectors, remembering its

rich and pluralist history, repelled the government's intrusion. From this moment on, successive governments abandoned direct ideological intervention and turned to influencing the purpose of youth work through managerial control of whatever funds were deemed to be available.

In the aftermath of major post-Poll Tax cuts to youth services, new state funding for work with young people was channelled through specified initiatives such as the Single Regeneration Budget. To compete for finance, politicians, bureaucrats and youth work managers had to agree to achieve predetermined targets and outcomes. Although in its infancy monitoring of this strategy was sloppy, the writing was on the wall. In such a climate youth work was manoeuvred in the direction of a preventative and welfare model. Insidiously, the tradition of social and informal education was eroded, surviving sometimes only at the level of soothing platitudes.

Yet contradiction did not disappear entirely. Within the training agencies, the AOP/ADP commitment of the 1980s clung on, its advocates still in post, although its dominance was showing signs of stress. Some within the institutions felt that the litany of anti-sexist and anti-racist practice was becoming institutionalised. Sceptical students were learning to regurgitate what was expected in their assignments. Fearful perhaps of losing control of a last refuge of the radical spirit, academic staff were sometimes slow to submit their own endeavours to critical scrutiny.

Meanwhile in practice a tightrope was being walked. The devastating cuts of 1992-93 mentioned above were paving the way for a step-by-step change in the direction being taken by youth work. Within the field, many began to make their pact with so-called "new managerialism", others sought to duck and dive in defence of a pluralist tradition. In Wigan, we attempted to call the bluff on the increasing calls for a corporate approach to services in local government. We created a new structure underpinning services for young people, which brought together all departments of the council – education, social services, leisure, housing along with other interested parties such as the police and the Council for Voluntary Youth Work. Within this collective of concern, the Youth Service preserved its distinctive identity and autonomy, being identified as the soul and conscience of the enterprise. This relatively successful initiative did not survive the arrival of integrated youth services a few years later, within which youth work began to move from the core to the periphery. The disciples of "new managerialism" within youth work were winning the day, claiming that to have credibility youth work had to embrace the discipline of measurable outcomes.

In this acceptance of neo-liberal ideology, a significant number of managers and workers were at one with the outlook of Blair's transformed Labour Party. Despite evidence to the contrary, there was still a lingering belief in youth work circles that New Labour would be a vehicle for social progress. In accord with the direction of the party, youth managers and workers moved, consciously or otherwise, to the political centre, leaving behind them the last vestiges of a critical perspective. Thus, it was that many within youth work danced in the streets for joy when Blair swept to a landslide victory in 1997.

### **→ 1997-2010 – enter the prescribed and predictable**

Once in power, New Labour inflicted slowly but surely an instrumental agenda upon youth work, utterly in keeping with a neo-liberal desire to generate individualised conformity, utterly in keeping too with the renouncing of any alternative vision of the future. In place of the Old Labour dream of a state managing capitalism in the

interests of the workers, New Labour substituted a state managing the workers in the interests of capitalism. New Labour's mind was made up. Young people needed to shape up. As Jeffs and Smith note, the last decade of governmental documents such as "Every child matters" (2003) and "Transforming youth work" (2002) were "simply prospectuses for the delivery of already agreed priorities and outcomes" (Jeffs and Smith 2008, p. 280). With the introduction of the strategy of integrated youth services, youth work as a distinctive site of practice came under increasing threat. Voluntary and open encounters with young people were perceived as inherently out of control and dangerous. Increasingly, New Labour all but deleted the term "youth work" from their authoritarian discourse. It was replaced by the patronising and simplistic notion of "positive activities". Social education and informal education were declared outcasts, banished to the pedagogical wilderness.

At a theoretical level, there was never a serious debate about what ideas might support this shift from the educational to the recreational. The mantra of "new managerialism" was a facile utilitarian "what works works". Via this atheoretical and anti-intellectual route, managers pressed workers to accept a prescribed approach to their engagement with young people. However, even crude pragmatism needed some theoretical nourishment. Imperceptibly and surreptitiously, ideas drawn from the American tradition of positive youth development (PYD) were smuggled into the thinking of both managers and workers. To my knowledge, the only systematic case for its efficacy was made by Schulmann and Davies (2007). At heart, PYD draws upon what it deems to be the science of adolescent or developmental psychology to inform the design of "developmentally appropriate" programmes for work with young people.

Within the English tradition, mention of adolescence has been metaphorical rather than scientific, speaking of a passage to adulthood, which might be rough, smooth or both, but not one reducible to formulaic stages. PYD takes an opposite stance, confident in its certainty. PYD claims that its scientific underpinning allows it to identify the particular assembly of attributes or competencies a normal 14 or 16 year old ought to possess. It proposes that there are measurable developmental benchmarks. In its misguided arrogance it argues that the implementation of its programmes will, for example:

- encourage self-determination (but, we might ask, at what cost to others?);
- provide recognition for positive behaviour (yet it ignores the issue of who defines what is positive);
- create opportunities for pro-social involvement (failing once more to address who defines what is antisocial).

None of these awkward questions though ruffled New Labour's adoption of its philosophy. It was a way of seeing things whose time had come. Its functionalist focus chimed perfectly with the government's demonisation of all those young people who were perceived as antisocial and dysfunctional. Through this lens, youth work was transformed into positive activities – give them something to do and all will be well.

When scrutinised, PYD falls at the first hurdle. The subject of its enterprise, the normal adolescent, is an ideal type distilled from all manner of comparative experiments, tests and scores. At heart this adolescent of whatever age is an abstraction and a myth. He or she is a general individual, who does not exist (Burman 1994). Nevertheless, the easy explanations afforded by PYD have proved enormously seductive. The model adolescent of PYD's fantasy, normative in behaviour and attitude, attuned to the needs

of the prevailing order, was New Labour's empowered model citizen. In parallel, PYD offered the prospect of the model youth worker, planning meticulously his or her scientifically predetermined programme of social integration.

To the best of my knowledge, PYD has not found its way yet into the curricula of youth work's training institutions. Its bearers into the heart of the work have been the managerialists, the external trainers and consultants. Nevertheless, as Jeffs and Spence (2007) note, the impact of modularisation and the consequent fragmentation of knowledge, the ever-increasing emphasis on standards and competencies, reflected in the rise of National Vocational Qualifications, have combined to undermine a theoretically informed and argumentative youth work education. Nevertheless, the eloquent voices from academia continue to fight the cause of a critical informal education (Batsleer 2008).

As Davies documents, the New Labour years have witnessed the evacuation of what were key principles underlying social or informal education – starting from their agendas, negotiating a critical dialogue, within which the educator is educated too and, not least, the voluntary relationship (Davies 2009, p. 79). In reality, the workforce has been split asunder, although this fissure remains partially hidden. Workers defending the informal tradition speak of “losing a belief in what they are doing”, pursued as they are by the turn to individualised casework, by the pressure to accredit experiences, however ephemeral, and by the shift to explicit surveillance and policing. Meanwhile, many more workers than the profession dares to admit have adjusted to and even welcomed the tidier, less complicated and contradictory world of prescribed targets and predictable outcomes. At another level, to return to the influence of PYD, its instrumental outlook has fitted perfectly the expansion of short-term initiatives. In one London borough, whilst youth centres were being closed, a proliferation of six- to eight-week modules focused on positive activities and healthy lifestyles were targeted on particular working-class estates. Staff were parachuted in to deliver these developmental programmes, only to disappear a few weeks later. The task of growing roots in a community and building relationships had been jettisoned.

It is important to note too the debilitating effect upon the voluntary youth sector of the last two decades of “funding by numbers”. A once fiercely defended independence has been ground down as voluntary youth organisations have been pulled into competing for funding and capitulating to the attached government's strings.

As we close discussion of this final period we trip over once more the relationship of those within youth work to New Labour. Certainly, a notable number of managers and indeed key national figures were New Labour fellow travellers. Despite the party's neo-liberal rebirth, it seemed that they believed that a social-democratic pulse was still to be felt. They took refuge in the fact that New Labour improved the funds available for work with young people. Their incorporation into the New Labour project in all manner of ways meant that they were reluctant to face the decisive question: What was the purpose and character of New Labour's transformation of youth work? By the end of its tenure, New Labour had all but completed the journey from youth work as social education, as a form of critical pedagogy, to youth work as a tool of social engineering.

### → Issues for debate

1. Is social education dead and cremated or can its resurrected body in contemporary garb rise from the ashes? In recent years those of us campaigning in defence of youth work in the UK have talked of “democratic and emancipatory” practice.

The strength of this definition is that its commitment to the voluntary relationship, to free association and critical conversation is in continuity with the hopes of the 19th-century pioneers; that its understanding of the significance of gender, race, sexuality, disability and class in young people's lives is a tribute to the influence of the social movements in the 1970s and 1980s; and that its stress on the autonomy of the improvisatory, yet disciplined youth worker embraces both volunteer and professional alike. In the face of positive youth development, which seeks to impose programmed order upon problematic youth, we need to revive a pluralist alliance in praise of voluntary and open youth work.

2. Doing so means we will have to engage with the prevailing orthodoxy that youth work ought to be concerned primarily with preventing an array of antisocial behaviours, largely pursued by recalcitrant minorities, who require a policed regime of positive activities. This will be difficult as major actors within youth work, for example, the National Youth Agency and the CYWU, have overplayed the card that less youth work equals more troublesome young people. We are obliged to affirm that youth work's aspiration is to contribute to the emergence of critically involved young citizens across the board. Such democratically inclined young people might well, in the eyes of the powerful, undertake negative activities. Put simply, youth work is education for democracy, for which there are neither tick-boxes nor guarantees. Democracy is the politics of hope, a belief in the potential of human creativity.
3. In forging an alliance for youth work, where do we stand on the post-Albemarle professionalisation of work with young people? Within the UK, the CYWU is at the forefront of believing that a regulated and certificated vanguard of graduate workers, bonded by licence and a unique set of values and skills is the way forward. Indeed, to question such a craft mentality is to be accused of political backwardness. Yet, in essence youth work is but a particular expression of the overarching, centuries-old, humanist project of imagining and making empathetic and egalitarian relationships in all the corners of our lives, be we parents, members of the local community or whatever. In this context, youth work has no proprietary claims to what are widely held values such as respect and equality or to widely held skills in communication. To suggest otherwise is an excess of hubris. Youth work is not a cluster of corporate values or professional skills. Rather it is a distinctive site of practice, a negotiated space of voluntary interaction, where ideas and values are argued about. Professionalisation harbours protectionism, excluding thousands of volunteers and part-time workers from the ranks of the anointed, even though these lesser mortals have the most direct contact with young people themselves. At the very least, following Lorenz (2009), we need to debate what might be the relationship of the "people" professions to the belief that the emancipation of the *demos* must be the work of the people themselves.
4. Linked intimately to the dilemma around professionalisation is the status of training. Training is too easily taken for granted as being a good thing. Yet training in the institutions can lag behind imaginative developments in practice or, in defending a critical perspective, can find itself in advance of a stagnant or regressive practice. This tension is exacerbated further by the character of in-service training, which can complement or subvert the philosophy promulgated in further and higher education. The rise of the entrepreneurial consultant and trainer has opened the door to the short-term introduction into the work of all manner of psychology-led fads and fancies. All of this needs unravelling.
5. Within the UK, the major political parties all jockey for the centre ground. Major ideological conflict is a relic of the past. In this context, the unwritten allegiance of youth work to the social-democratic tradition, to the Labour Party, is past its sell-by date. From now on, any political party has to be analysed anew – with

scepticism, but with a sharp eye for the opportunities thrown up by a political and bureaucratic class in crisis. In the coming period we need to resuscitate our collective imagination and autonomy. Organising independently our ranks will be composed, hopefully, of both utopian romantics and principled pragmatists. In the struggle to defend and extend youth work as critical pedagogy, we will need each other, both on the streets and in the corridors of power.

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# **Youth cultures and youth work: perspectives from the south of Europe**

*Carles Feixa*

## **→ Introduction: working with youth cultures**

This paper is heavily influenced by the workshop on “Youth Cultures and Youth Work” organised in the framework of the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy, during the Belgian presidency of the European Union. As the colleague with whom I shared the session, Christian Spatscheck, has written a beautiful and synthetic essay on the notion of youth culture and its implications for theoretical and practical youth work, I thought of dedicating this paper to another theme, which in some ways can be considered an adaptation of the classic “magic triangle” among youth policy, youth work and youth studies. In this case, I will attempt a triangulation between the socio-political context (more or less aware derivation of youth policy), emerging youth culture (more or less unconscious derivation of youth work) and subcultural studies (more or less unmediated derivation of youth studies). Since the relevance of such connections in the countries of northern Europe are known and have been widely studied, especially in Britain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries (see Hall and Jefferson 1976; Fornäs and Bolin 1995; Nilan and Feixa 2006;

Fowler 2008; Coussée et al. 2010; see also Spatscheck in this volume), I will focus my presentation on three southern European countries whose contributions are less well known: France, Italy and Spain. In each case, I will present an original author and an illustrative sample of academic work from the last half century. I will relate this to historical issues, political developments and dissemination of youth subcultures.<sup>55</sup>

The social and political implications of youth cultures – youth as metaphor for social change – re-emerges cyclically in Europe, especially in times of economic crisis and rapid social change. Among the recent examples we can quote the “riots” in the French *banlieues* in autumn 2005, the “latino gang panics” in Spain and Italy in 2006, the youth uprising in Greece in winter 2008, the “Indignados” movements in spring 2011 and the “riots” in the English suburbs in summer 2011. In all these cases, youth work has been mediated through youth cultures.

### → **Ragazzi di vita, Gramsci, De Martino, Pasolini**

*In fact, old people “steer” life, but they pretend they let the young steer; “fiction” is also important in these things. Young people see that the results of their actions are contrary to their expectations, they believe they “steer” (or they pretend they do) and they seem more and more uneasy and unhappy. The crisis where the elements for solution cannot develop at the necessary speed makes it all the worse; whoever dominates cannot solve the crisis, but they have the power to prevent others from solving it. (Gramsci 1975, p. 1718)*

At the beginning of the 1950s, Rome was a city of contrasts where the splendour of the *dolce vita* in Via Veneto coincided with the spread of *borgate* (huts) in the urban outskirts populated by poor people or immigrants from the south of the country. In these post-war years, Pier Paolo Pasolini had just arrived in the city and had entered this suburban world, living with young people, the marginalised and prostitutes, an experience that would later feed his literary and cinematic works. The first fruit of this radical “field work” is the novel *Ragazzi di vita* (1955). In the first chapter, the main characters, Riccetto and Marcello, two adolescents who live in the *borgate*, walk round Rome looking for cigarette ends; they steal lids and pieces of tube from the aqueduct; they gamble their money with their older friends and lose whatever they earned from their gatherings; they rob a blind man who is begging in front of St Paul’s Basilica in order to have fun in a barge docked in the Tiber. After a swim, they watch a swallow fighting to get out of an eddy in the river: it is a symbol of their own experience, the daily fight for survival. Adapting elements from the “picaresque” novel and “neo-realist” cinema – in 1950 Luis Buñuel had released *Los olvidados* – Pasolini created a “vivid document” even more disquieting for being presented in a narrative way. In *Ragazzi di vita* nothing is invented: characters, environments, habits, behaviours, places, language are all alive with the strength of reality. The writer had the habit of walking through the outskirts of Rome, thirsty for direct knowledge of phenomena, looking for a direct confrontation with things. In the warren-like cheap housing estate, which was ruined after any rain, between huts and rotten planks, human voices cried out to demand that their most basic needs be met. Adolescents create as a group the cultural forms that most crudely reflect this ecosystem.

In his next novel, *Una vita violenta* (1958), Pasolini outlines the shy and unsure awakening of a civic awareness in the mind of a sub-proletarian, without

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55. This text is based on previous research by the author (Feixa 1998, 2004; Feixa and Porzio 2005). In the text we focus on some classical research.

renouncing a crude description of the area. The main character, Tomasso, appears in the beginning as a reckless underworld spy aiming at being a normal *bravo ragazzo*. His disappointment with some of the experiences he goes through – an unrequited love, time in jail, being in hospital for a while – takes him through different contradictory phases: from fascist aggressiveness to the temptation of “settling down” and ending up a communist. But just when he seems to have made a political decision, Tomasso ends his life suddenly in a tragic finale. These are the dynamics the author uses in his first films, like *Accatone* and *Mamma Roma*. Like the southern peasants described by Carlo Levi in *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (1943), adolescents and sub-proletarians from the *borgate* reveal an image of a world which is only apparently contemporary, which is “beyond power and history”, like a moral horizon apparently based on southern Italy’s moral code and a certain “epicurean stoicism” – a residue from the Roman world. It is a horizon from which this free area of “contemporary barbarism” emerges, a core feature of the modern culture as pointed out by the ethnologist Ernesto de Martino (De Martino 1980; Feixa 1998). Just as it was necessary to “to go beyond the end of Eboli” in order to understand the asymmetric relationships that tie southern peasants with the state and the dominant groups, the world of sub-proletarian young people could not be explained unless you went beyond the *borgate* to show the ties between misery and the country’s wider urban and industrial development. In the underground tie linking Pasolini and De Martino, one can grasp the originality of Italian Marxism in its effort to link the social with the cultural and the symbolic, in its interest in seeing new social actors like young people, and in its emphasising “direct research” as a means to overcome scholastic theoreticism.

In the 1930s, during a time spent in jail under Mussolini’s regime, Gramsci outlined some novel reflections on the so-called *questione dei giovani* (Feixa 1998). In the first of his *Quaderni*, apart from quoting the ideological manipulations that the cult for the young can entail (as the quotation in this paragraph shows), the lucid thinker suggested taking into account the “class interference” that sometimes explains youth dissidence:

*The “old” generation always carries out the education of the young. There will be, for example, conflict and disagreement, but these are superficial phenomena, inherent to any educational mission ... unless there is class interference, i.e: young people (or an important part of them) in the ruling class (understood in the wider sense) rebel and pass to the progressive class that historically has been able to seize power .... When the phenomenon has a national scope, when there is no open class difference, the question gets complicated and can be chaotic. Young people are in a permanent state of rebellion because they persist in defending their deep causes, and there’s no room left for analysis, criticism or problem solving (not just conceptual and abstract solutions, but historical and real solutions). (Gramsci 1975, pp. 115-16)*

Phenomena like mysticism, sensuality, indifference or violence do not have to be attributed, therefore, to youth’s inner nature but to the changing historical contexts that determine the emergence of a crisis of authority. The concept “crisis of authority” takes us to another core concept by Gramsci: hegemony. Understood as the capacity for ethical political steering, more through consensus and ideological control than through force, hegemony has a lot to do with the youth issue: on the one hand, education of the new generations is fundamental for reproducing a hegemonic work (and also for the articulation of anti-hegemonic projects); on the other hand, young people play a relevant role as paradigms of the “crisis of authority”, which is really highlighting the “crisis of hegemony”: “Crisis consists

in the death of the old when the new cannot be born: in this intermediate period the most varied pathologies can be seen .... This is linked to the so-called 'youth issue' determined by the 'crisis of authority' of the old steering generations and also by the mechanical obstacle over the ones who could steer to carry out their mission (that is: the new generations)" (Gramsci 1975, p. 311-312).

If Gramsci's observations about folklore had a big influence on Italian anthropology, Ernesto De Martino also showed a pioneer interest in the emergence of new youth identities. In his paper "Furore in Svezia" (1962) the author reflects on the explosion of violence that broke out in Stockholm during New Year's Eve in 1956, when gangs of over 5 000 adolescents damaged the city centre. That was one of the first warnings from youth outbursts that would periodically shake western society, and whose protagonists would be called by different names, such as rebels without a cause, Teddy boys, mods, hippies, skinheads, punks and hooligans. To begin with, De Martino places the fury of young Swedes in a transcultural framework, alongside the rites of puberty of the Roman Saturnalia and the Kwakiutl, as trials of overcoming the "danger or chaos" that all civilisations have had to confront. Though these rites, a destructive impulse and fury were stimulated so as to explode, but at the same time they had a mythic and ceremonial pattern that transformed them into symbols of acquisition of new social roles within the framework of the total renewal of the community. The problem of the modern world is that it does not have equivalent rites, so "our institutions are incapable of establishing a more adult and responsible humanity" (ibid., p. 231). In this context, young people invent new rites and new symbols to fill the gap and construct a new social identity. Besides, I know (from personal communication) that De Martino's interest in youth is not limited to this exotic Scandinavian example. Thanks to his relationship with Pasolini, and especially to his partner, who worked as a social assistant in a youth home in the Roman outskirts, De Martino had direct contact with urban popular youth through his collaboration with the work of his partner who wrote about the subject and his interest in the emerging ways of life in these youth environments. Thus, De Martino undertook an ethnologic study of youth gangs, which had been abandoned since Thrasher and Whyte's contributions, and which were later taken up by authors such as Monod. He did so whilst forgoing the criminalistic approach prevalent at that time, and the model of social pathology and infection that Chicago ethnographers used to be so fond of. Besides, the emphasis he put upon symbolic aspects and his attention to "ritual resistance" foreshadowed later theories by the Birmingham authors (although they were not acquainted with De Martino's works and only claimed to be inspired by Gramsci).

### → **Barjots, blousons noirs, voyous. Monod and the gangs**

*Youth gangs constitute the core point around which contemporary youth myths have fixed their paper stars .... In order to study the primitive we need to leave behind the ingenuous myth that in a global way the civilised man imposes (I) on the savage (the other). In the same way, in this case, it is necessary to begin by shifting the image screen that is imposing a significance on the observer rather than reflecting reality. Besides, in both cases we are talking about limited groups, theoretically thinkable of as one; delimited, visitable, "habitable", accessible to an "inner" knowledge ... And what is ethnology if not a respectful yet passionate reflection about the other? "The other", whom the violence organised on a large scale by our civilisation is so worryingly trying to make disappear. (Monod 1972, pp. 10-12)*

Mathieu Kassovitz's film *La Haine* (1995) is a dramatic dissection of French urban-popular youth in the 1990s. In an HLM city (*Habitation à Loyer Modéré*: protected

housing estate) in the outskirts of Paris, an adolescent is fighting to survive after a police attack. In the middle of the social chaos provoked by this incident, three of his friends try to get by. It is a multi-ethnic gang: a Jewish boy, an Algerian boy and another boy of Senegalese origin who are together facing an uncertain future and the same hate of the system. The documentary film explains the youngsters' journey the day after their friend's death. From their wretched suburban houses to the splendours of the city centre, they pass through different spaces and environments: the anguish of "doing nothing" at home and in the street, the tell-tale signs of a multicultural suburb (graffiti, hip hop and rap), the journey by RER (city train) to Les Halles station in the centre, the meeting with the *jeunesse dorée* (golden youth), the art exhibition, the night-time aggression by skinheads, and the conflictual relationships with the *flics* (the police). A hermetic argot, a key element in the original version, symbolises the persistence of a subcultural identity amongst the young people in the periphery. It is this differential identity that goes beyond ethnic differences, that creates a sense of solidarity and hatred of the external and, in this case, prefigures the final tragedy.

Although the historical context is different, the film provides a reminder of a similar plot in a forgotten classic about urban ethnology: I am referring to Jean Monod's *Les Barjots. Essai d'ethnologie des bandes de jeunes* (1968), which was published shortly before the demonstrations of May 1968. The term *barjo* is the inversion of *jobard* (fool, silly), following a typical procedure in marginal languages: talking *verlan*, from *l'anvers* (the other way round). In the argot of the *blousons noirs* (literally "black leather jackets"), *barjot* no longer meant ingenuous, it did not describe the bribe's victim, but a "lazy" young person who feigns madness and behaves extravagantly in order to defend himself against a society that is marginalising him. In 1964, the young French ethnologist and disciple of Claude Lévi-Strauss, to whom the book is dedicated, had decided to follow his teacher's advice and enter dangerous territory: the study of these "new savages" – young street gangs in the Parisian outskirts – according to the dominant society. The author observed that the social representations of gangs, spread by the mass media, had many similarities with the traditional images of the "primitive", even in their ambivalent treatments: the primitive could be a good savage or a dangerous barbaric, and youth seemed to be alternately "the most beautiful age of life" and a symptom of aggressiveness and social degeneration. Monod himself explains in a previous research paper (1967) that his interest in the subject came from observing youth violence, which was spreading in western society, such as that on New Year's Eve in Stockholm in 1956.

In order to analyse what was behind the contemporary myth of youth, Monod decided to explore the internal logic of gangs, assuming that this logic, rather than its translation into "our" language, or its reduction to our myths, was at the basis of its meaning. Monod's aim was to carry out – inspired by the method developed by Lévi-Strauss to study the mythology of the American Indians – a structural analysis of the gangs' lifestyles and symbolic systems. Like Whyte, he focused on a particular *blousons noirs* gang: La bande de la Place N in northern Paris, with whom he established contact at the dogdems. After earning their confidence, he lived with them for a year. The documentary part of the book is organised in a narrative way, and constitutes a detailed description "from inside" of the group's daily life, their argot, their way of dressing, their behaviour, their values, their rites, their life stories, and their relationships with other gangs and with adult institutions. The gang was made up of about 20 members at that time, mainly male adolescents between the ages of 15 and 20, working class, and from the old gang, *voyous* (lazy), who had been in the same place at the beginning of

the decade. Their style was more sophisticated and they had evolved a “snob” identity, especially because of their integration of elements from mass culture: the influence of American films like *The Wild Ones* or *Rebel without a Cause* and of stars like Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley and James Dean was not prominent any more. They had a passion for the Rolling Stones, and also liked imitating British styles. Therefore, it was not the typical criminal gang described by the criminological literature of that time.

The second part of the book attempts to make a structural analysis of the ethnographic material. Monod was interested in discovering the deep structures subjacent to appearances. Therefore, the analysis is structured around the classical axes of the structuralist school (relatives, language, mythology, ritual). For the author, the gang plays many of the roles played by the family in other societies:

*It is significant that the gap between the family and the society, where the young people construct their culture, is full of expressions about the relationships that members hold with each other, similar to kinship expressions; therefore, they structure a theoretically limited group of basic relationships and strong ties where communion is possible: tchowa means my brother. (Monod 1971, p. 367)*

He devotes a chapter to language, where he analyses the metamorphosis of argot as a process of construction of meanings shared by the group. The central part of his essay is centred on an analysis of the gang’s social structure, the internal hierarchies, antagonisms and alliances that they keep with other gangs. According to Monod, conflicts and tensions that are envisaged from the outside as pathologic and gratuitous violence are seen as strong ritual situations from inside. Like a song challenge between Eskimos, insults and mocking toward Tim and Noël, the two most controversial members of the gang, were a way to replace real latent opposition to open ritual conflicts and acted as balance restorers. Fights with other gangs, which the author describes in detail, appear to be periodical simulations rather than spontaneous violent confrontations. In order to discover its structure, the myth needs to be examined first in all its variants. This is why Monod not only assesses the *blousons noirs* gang, but also outlines an interesting comparison with other youth gangs in Paris in the mid-1960s, such as *voyous*, beatniks, *yé-yés*, rockers, gays and dandies. Behind the apparent heterogeneousness of styles, ways of dressing, musical tastes and meeting places, there is a common complex subjacent system of binary oppositions that gives body to the myth: for example, *barjots/ye-yés*, *voyous/snobs*, young/adult, proletarian/bourgeois, centre/periphery, overcoming/negation, and the 1950s and 1960s. These oppositions need to be understood as a reflection of the discontinuities between generations and of the discontinuities between the existing subcultural styles in the same historical moment.

In spite of some structuralist fickleness – like the obsession for finding binary structures and parallelisms between gangs and primitive societies – Monod’s work is extraordinarily novel in its theoretical approach and very rich in its ethnographical content. But his work seemed to go to waste and did not create a school among the French ethnologists (the book never received a second edition, and is very rarely mentioned by his colleagues). On the one hand, the author did not finish his project of transcultural research about youth, and chose to go back to classical ethnology (in 1971, he published a monograph about an indigenous community in Venezuelan Amazonia); then he separated from the academy (he left the Collège de France to devote himself to comics and lived in an isolated little village in Cévennes). On the other hand, his structuralist colleagues dedicated themselves to the study of more “serious” subjects and to more “exotic” scenarios: his work had

been too early in time to be taken into account, and the failure of the May 1968 protests ended with the protagonist role of youth movements.<sup>56</sup>

### → **Golfos, Pijos, Fiesteros – studies on youth cultures in Spain**

*We need to pay particular attention to such an important issue; we are used to following the news from abroad and we hear about it all the time – and specially its most serious consequences. We hear about English Teddy boys, Italian teppisti, the French blousons noirs, the German halbstarker, Venezuelan pavitos, and we think the whole thing is alien to us, serious as it is. We should be able to distinguish widely different areas, beginning with badly behaved and rude young people and ending in the criminal. If we understand that gamberro is the one that breaks basic social rules to seek his own satisfaction or his own comfort, without paying any attention to his neighbour's concerns, we cover a wide social area, really unsuspected and impressive. (López Riocerezo 1970, p. 60)*

*Los golfos*, one of the first films by Carlos Saura (1959) shows the adventures of a youth gang in a Spanish suburb in the middle of the post-war period, though on the threshold of modernisation under the auspices of the “plans for development”, which were being drawn up that year. The film is the story of four young people in a Madrid suburb, increasingly inclined towards a more engaged offensiveness. Inspired by Luis Buñuel’s *Los Olvidados* (The forgotten), Saura shoots with a reportage-like style (in a similar fashion to the *cinéma-verité*) the frustrations of youth at the beginning of this development. *La lenta agonía de los peces* (1974) (The slow agony of the fish) portrays the doubts of a young Catalan man who falls in love with a Swedish girl on the Costa Brava, and discovers the counter-cultural movements across the Pyrenees. Each of these films shows totally opposed youth cultures (proletarian *golfos* and upper-class *jipis*), which become the symbol and emblem of the process of accelerated cultural modernisation that is taking place in the country. Youth cultures in Spain appeared in the middle of Franco’s regime, at a stage that some people called *dictablanda*, soft dictatorship (as opposed to *dictadura*, the hardest times and also the Spanish for dictatorship), a period of about two decades, from the time of the development plans (1959) to the first democratic elections (1977). From the institutional point of view, the Frente de Juventudes became the Organización Juvenil Española, changing authoritarian schemes into more democratic models of service to youth (Sáez Marín 1988). Academically, the social sciences were still suspected of sympathising with democratic movements, although within the Instituto de la Juventud (Youth Institute) a modernising

56. A decade later, at the beginning of the 1980s, when Bourdieu (1986) wrote his essays on youth, sociologists felt interested again in youth marginality, in the new context of crisis of the welfare state, social breakdown and cultural fragmentation (Delaporte 1982; Dubet 1985; Lagrée and Lew-Fai 1985). The emerging actors are now the second generation of North African, Central African and Antillean immigrants, residing in urban outskirts, who construct their identities around massive languages, like rai, rap and hip hop (Bouamama 1993; Fize 1993). Unlike the previous styles, these new youth languages find their way mainly through mass media; getting the marginal to break onto centre stage (it is not strange today to see hip hop in large Paris theatres as part of their programmes of contemporary music). Other pieces of ethnographical research move away from the model of marginal youth and focus on other youth groups. In *Le temps des tribus* (1988), Maffesoli makes a reflection about the process of “tribalisation” of social identities in general, and of youth identities in particular; a process that can evidence the erosion of individualism in mass society and the emergence of a new sociability. The issue of “gangs” emerged again after the “riots” in the French “banlieues” in autumn 2005. See the discussion between Jean Monod and Michel Kokoreff in the influential journal *Esprit* (Monod and Kokoreff 2008).



tendency cropped up that eventually used the techniques of empirical sociology to promote the first youth reviews (De Miguel 2000). But youth culture hardly appeared in these reviews, which offered only a very general understanding of attitudes and values.

In 1970, Father José María López Riocerezo, author of many “edifying” works on young people, published a study entitled *The worldwide problem of vandalism and its possible solutions*, in which he shows interest in a series of demonstrations of youth nonconformist, offensive trends: *gamberros*, *blousons noirs*, Teddy boys, *vitelloni*, *raggare*, rockers, beatniks, *macarras*, hippies, *halbstakers*, provos, *yé-yés*, *rocanroleros*, *pavitos* – all variants of the same species: the “rebel without a cause”. Although he considers Spain safe from this dangerous trend (“maybe because of historical constants, the weight of centuries and family tradition”), he concludes by wondering whether these trends have something to do with the transformation of a rural or agricultural society into an industrial or post-industrial society: “When this step is taken quickly, there is a cultural and sociological crisis, like an obstruction of the channels of the individual’s integration into the regulations of society” (López Riocerezo 1970, p. 244). The author, who used to be a Professor of Criminal Law at the Royal College of Advanced Studies of El Escorial, considers *gamberrismo* (vandalism) one of the most pressing social problems of our civilisation. For the author, a *gamberro* is nothing but the Spanish variant of the foreign model being imported. He discusses the etymology, as the word is not included in the dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language. He searches in Basque-French (*gamburu*: joke, somersault, open-air diversion) and Greek (*gambrias*: vandalism). This second meaning not only justifies the declaration of dangerousness “against those who cynically and insolently attack the rules of social coexistence by attacking people or damaging things, without a cause or a reason” in the Ley de Vagos y Maleantes (Tramps and Malefactors Act), but also explains its origin or objective. He starts by drawing the international panorama, based on the available criminological literature (starting with biological determinists like Lombroso), to focus later on the Spanish case in news cuttings, articles in church magazines or magazines from the regime (mixing up data about simply delinquent gangs with information about trends and student movements). He ends up wondering about the causes of this wave of youth rebelliousness:

*Where is the deep evil created by English and American Teddy boys, the French blousons noirs, the Swedish raggare, Italian vitelloni or Spanish gamberros to be found? The problem is not in their external features: their odd way of living, their extravagant hairstyles, their taste for trouble making, their liking of rock and roll or twist, their passion for exceeding the speed limit and their gathering in gangs. The real problem lies in their lack of discipline, ideology or morals. They do not have any self-control, and their parties reach the edge of antisocial behaviour, so they easily step into delinquency. (López Riocerezo 1970, p. 17)*

By the end of the 1970s, along with the transition to democracy, a new social subject appeared in the Spanish scenario, labelled very significantly *Tribus urbanas* (urban tribes). The communication media would soon devote great attention to the phenomenon, inciting campaigns of moral panic (like when a young mod was killed by a rocker) in tandem with commercial appropriation (such as reports advertising where to buy each tribe’s outfit). A Teddy boy from Zaragoza wrote a letter to a newspaper to remind that “the only tribes in the world are the blacks of Africa”. But a disabled punk (“el Cojo”) became famous thanks to television for breaking a street light with his crutch during the huge student demonstrations in 1987, which prompted this comment from a columnist: “Sociologists should

give an explanation for this African and underdeveloped phenomenon" (quoted in Feixa 1988, p. 5). The institutional context of the time was characterised by the democratisation of the Youth Institute and the transfer of competence for youth to local councils and autonomous communities. In nearly all fields, one of the first initiatives of organisations was to promote youth studies, nearly always through opinion reviews, brilliantly analysed and criticised by Cardús and Estruch (1984) for the Catalan case. Paradoxically, during the peak of *La movida*, qualitative and testimonial studies that could explain the emerging youth cultures disappeared. Only at the end of the period do some studies show a shift in interest towards young people's cultural consumption.

*Historias del Kronen* (stories from the Kronen), a film by Montxo Armendáriz (1994) based on the novel by Alfredo Mañas (1989), shows the life of a group of upper-class young people (*pijos*), their night-time adventures, their fresh styles and their uneasy feelings about life. Other films of the same time picture the birth of other forms of youth sociability: *El angel de la guarda* (1995) presents the life of a young mod, belonging to a family who sympathise with Franco's regime, and who is in conflict with young rockers. It is the time of the socialist government in Spain, when the generations that had led the fight against Franco were settling into power and view with suspicion the apathetic and apolitical young people, and see their aesthetics and ways of living as purely commercial and consumerist. From the point of view of youth cultures, this period is characterised by three different processes: the segmentation of youth cultures into many styles that appear like a shopping catalogue; the revival of the *pijo* (a way to openly recover a higher class identity); and spearheading nightlife with a generation of a new styles, the *makinero* or lower class clubbers (between the proliferation of new clubs, the explosion of electronic commercial music and the results of synthetic drugs). The International Year of Youth (1985) was a milestone in studies on youth in Spain. The hegemony of opinion surveys was in crisis for internal (a methodological criticism of their gaps and excesses) as well as external reasons (changes in youth policies brought about by integral planning). A certain myth about youth of the past arose: old *progres* (progressives), now in positions of power, idealise their rebel past and criticise the young people's lack of arguments and for living under the rules of consumerism – it is the hegemony of the *pijo*. A sociologist even suggested that the term "urban tribes" be replaced by "shopping tribes":

*Those rebel tribes, inorganically organised, who invented cries like songs, who knew how to make a great to-do to create social uniforms. They invented a way of drinking, a way of eating, a way of sitting down, a way of walking, a way of talking or cheering, and dressing. They are no longer relevant ... Hippies were buried long ago ... Pijos, on the contrary, are unconditional kings of big shopping areas, and they are certainly the hegemonic tribe in the 1990s. (Ruiz 1998, p. 192-96).*

*Taxi*, one of the latest films by Carlos Saura (1999), depicts the life of a group of young *pelaos* who are manipulated by an extreme right-wing taxi driver. They attack immigrants and homosexuals, and they go as far as murder. *Pelaos* are the Spanish version of Nazi skins, neo-Nazi young people entering the skinhead movement and carrying out atrocities (somehow linked to the football hooligans) according to the Spanish press in the late 1980s (although the *pelaos* do not really become well-known socially until the mid-1990s, because of a greater social concern with the arrival of new waves of immigrants). They coincided with the explosion of *okupas*, the Spanish version of the squatters who appeared after 1968, linked to the occupation of empty houses and to experimenting with new alternative and counter-cultural ways of living together.

With the change of millennium, Spanish youth cultures' characteristics may be generalised according to three major tendencies. First, a certain activism in the public sphere has been revived and reflected in the anti-globalisation movement and its cultural effects (from the singer Manu Chao's hybrid music to a neo-hippy trend). Second, dance culture has become symbolised in different expressions of the *fiestero* movement (the most intellectualised around festivals like Sonar, digital publications and the techno style, the most ludic around new clubs and fashion styles, and the most clandestine around rave parties). Third, the Internet has opened a space for the generation of chatroom culture and virtual communities that express different styles (like cyberpunks and hackers), although the use of virtual space affects all groups. The impact of the various cultures' distinctive elements is projected into different age groups. But what is most representative of this period is the fading of boundaries between the different subcultures, and the processes of social and symbolic syncretism.

### → Conclusion

Although the classic stories of the studies on youth culture draw almost exclusively on authors such as Hall and Jefferson (1976), Hebdige (1979) and Willis (1990), the contributions of authors such as De Martino, Monod and López Riocerezo should also be taken into account in understanding a cultural model of youth less tied to consumption and mass culture and more connected with new forms of youth participation, urban marginality and public policy. In the digital age, it also means moving youth work from the traditional areas of formal education to new non-formal educational settings, so as to be relevant and vital to youth participation in cyberspace. This journey also demonstrates that the emergence of youth cultures and their social reactions are very much related to the structure of the welfare state, social policies and tendencies in formal youth associations.

In *Culture eXtreme* (2000), Massimo Canevacci suggests a reconceptualisation of youth mutations in the bodies of the contemporary metropolis. On the one hand, the concepts that had "built" youth as a self-aware group in the 1960s enter a crisis (end of countercultures, end of subcultures). On the other hand, there is an enlargement of the concept of youth (an end to formal age classes and rites of passage) and at the same time young people as social subjects cease to exist (end of labour, end of dualistic conception of the body). The author acknowledges that the Anglo-Saxon success in "subculture" is based on a biased and partial reading of Gramsci, which has led to a development of a type of Marxism, which pays attention to the autonomy of culture. But such a term stops making sense when there is no longer a "general unitary culture in front of which a subculture is defined as a sub" (Canevacci 2000, p. 19). The result is "fragmented, hybrid and transcultural cultures" (ibid., p. 29). Youth cultures without young people?

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*Christian Spatscheck*

## **Society and youth cultures – interpretations and conclusions for youth work<sup>57</sup>**

### **→ Introduction**

Over the last decades, youth cultures have become a global phenomenon found in nearly all modern societies. Young people create their own forms of culture by following influences from international backgrounds and combining them with local factors. Beginning with the youth movements around the time of the First World War, youth cultures developed within an ongoing dialectic of control and (re-)liberation (Giesecke 1975). This essay summarises the main theoretical approaches to the analysis of youth cultures from social theory and cultural studies. It tries to provide basic information about the sociocultural mechanisms between youth cultures and society, and aims to help youth workers to clarify their professional roles within possible tensions.

### **→ Early approaches: theories about youth and subcultures**

Frederic Thrasher and his colleagues from the Chicago School of Sociology formulated the first attempts at a theoretical description of youth cultures at the

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57. This text is an enlarged and updated version of Spatscheck 2007.

end of the 1920s (Moser 2000, p. 15). In his research about youth gangs from the poorer areas of Chicago, Thrasher was the first to formulate the idea of a special way of life of youth gangs, which reject dominant forms of mainstream culture through their development of different rituals, symbols and codes. The term “youth culture” was first used by the German reform pedagogue Gustav Wyneken around the time of the First World War (Spatscheck 2006, p. 125). As one of the leaders of the German youth movement, he used this term to describe his hopes for a new cultural revolution through liberated young people who began to gather in peer groups without the controlling influences of adults. By 1942, Talcot Parsons had introduced the term “youth culture” into sociology (Moser 2000, p. 17). He regarded the passage of youth as a relatively independent social status with specific values, norms, ideas and symbols. In 1947, the American sociologist Milton Gordon (1947) used the term “subculture” in the context of youth cultures. He tried to describe special cultures of ethnic groups, like Italian immigrants or black Americans, which followed rules that differed from the white US middle classes and, thereby, challenged the assumption of shared norms and values for a whole society (Farin 2002, p. 58). Later, American essays from Albert Cohen (1957) and German essays from Fritz Sack (1971) referred to the concept of subculture as delinquency. This connection has dominated the sociology of youth for a long time and can still be found in today’s discourses about youth cultures or at-risk youth.

In further research about subcultures, the German sociologist Rolf Schwendter (1971) separates subculture into part cultures and countercultures. He regards part cultures as middle-class forms of cultures that are dominated by adults, oriented to consumerism and compensation, and embodying important functions of integration connected with little potential for challenge of the public order. Countercultures he describes as cultures of effective opposition to the existing system that aim to direct the change of norms and institutions. Within this progressive type of counterculture, he classifies the youth cultures of the hippies, beatniks, and rockers as emotional progressive subcultures that strongly favour individual freedom, while he identifies rationalist progressive subcultures within the German intellectual and student movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

### → **British cultural studies: subversion through style**

From the middle of the 1960s, groundbreaking research about youth subcultures and their functions in society was carried out at the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham (Brooker 1998, p. 59). Making reference to earlier work by Richard Hoggart (1957) and Raymond Williams (1958, 1961), research at the CCCS saw cultural studies as a separate science of culture. The CCCS researchers followed a wider understanding of culture that comprises not only the works, expressions and artefacts of the official high culture but also the entire popular everyday culture (Brooker 1998; Moser 2000; Farin 2002). While former academic traditions only regarded singular objects of high culture, the researchers at the CCCS were the first to include the relations between the cultural objects and the people using and producing them. From this perspective, the ways of everyday life became relevant to formal research for the first time. The term “culture” was introduced as a new conceptual approach to analyse how individuals, groups and classes realise their social and material existence within their specific historical context (Lindner in Clarke and Honneth 1979, p. 9).

Researchers from the CCCS do not follow the concept of an integral and uniform youth generation. Instead, they identify different youth subcultures as class-related phenomena (Holert and Terkessidis 1997; Moser 2000; Farin 2002). Youth subcultures

are described as generational subsystems of the parents' class culture, which is differentiated in working-class, middle-class and upper-class culture. For the class cultures, a continuing struggle about power and subordination is assumed. In this conflict only one class culture can become the dominant form of culture. To explain these mechanisms, the CCCS researcher Dick Hebdige (1998, p. 15) uses the term "hegemony" as defined by Antonio Gramsci. He understands hegemony as the authority of one class over other dominated classes. According to Gramsci (see Hebdige 1998, p. 16), this authority is always designed to seem normal and natural, although the dominated classes would in fact have the possibility to rise up against the dominating class and its concepts of public order. Hebdige follows the arguments of Louis Althusser to explain this paradox with the concept of ideology. Althusser argues that through class-related ideologies the ideas of a "distorted" class consciousness are carried on unconsciously (Hebdige 1998, p. 12). In the works of the CCCS, youth cultures are regarded in relation to their class backgrounds and the dominant classes in society. The dichotomy "either class or generation"<sup>58</sup> is thereby annulled (Clarke and Honneth 1979, p. 45). Within the context of this class orientation, the authors from CCCS explore the ideas of typical working-class youth cultures like the rockers, Teddy boys, or punks, and typical middle-class youth cultures like the mods or hippies (Farin 2002, p. 62).

Young people's conflicts with their cultures of origin and with the dominant cultural hegemony are understood as a dispute with stylistic means that leads to a "subversion through style". Authors like Hebdige and Clarke analyse how young people apply stylistic objects to communicate with their environment (Hebdige 1998; Clarke and Honneth 1979). They take up a concept of Roland Barthes, who explained how in everyday culture signs become enlarged to be carriers of meaning that embody a new meaning of symbolic or mythological origin. For example, Barthes refers to a special cover photograph of the French journal, *Paris Match*. The title shows a picture of a black soldier wearing a French uniform and saluting the French flag. Beyond the overt meaning of the picture, Barthes recognises a second one: this picture communicates for him that "France is a great empire, under whose flag all her sons, without regard to their colour, serve loyally, and that there is no better argument against the opponents of a supposed colonialism than the eagerness of this young Negro to serve his supposed oppressors" (Barthes 1964, p. 95). According to Barthes, virtually every object of our everyday culture can be expanded into a sign with new symbolic and mythological meaning.

Hebdige shows how these processes can also be found in the youth cultures of punks and Rastas, where signs are adorned with new mythological meanings as well. Through the process of *bricolage* (tinkering), objects are taken from their usual contexts and ascribed new meanings (Hebdige 1998; Nachtwey 1987). Young people transfer their personal systems of representation to their newly designed youth cultural objects and create new objects of meaning. Newly created symbols are directed against the dominant forms of culture; they embody refusal of and resistance to them, and aberration, and receive a subversive character. Through the creation of new symbols, young people can distinguish themselves from adults and other youth cultures.

The major innovations arising from the CCCS youth culture studies are their new explanations of sociocultural mechanisms and the detailed analyses of the mechanisms of subversion through aesthetic and stylistic means. However, two aspects

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58. The quotations that were originally in German have been translated by the author.



of the work of the CCCS can be criticised. The first is their use of a culturalistic understanding of society that equates culture with social structures or even the whole society. Mario Bunge (1996, p. 56) argues from a socio-philosophical background that culture is only the sum of the properties of social systems and should not be equated or confused with social systems themselves. Secondly, according to newer studies, it seems no longer realistic to connect certain youth cultures directly to class-specific backgrounds (Vollbrecht 1995, 1997; Holert and Terkessidis 1997; Farin 2002; Ferchhoff, Sander and Vollbrecht 1995). At least since the late 1980s, youth cultures have become much more open to members of different class and milieu backgrounds. Therefore, a rigid class-specific division of youth cultures has become more and more obsolete. This should, however, not lead to the misconception that class-specific factors no longer influence the life of young people.

### → German debates about subcultures and lifestyles

At the end of the 1990s, the German sociologist Ralf Vollbrecht formulated a critique of the concept of the class-related assignment of youth cultures: “Early groupings of youth culture were predominantly related to their milieu of origin, and that meant it could effectively be anticipated which group arrangement would be attractive to which adolescent. Today’s youth cultures are largely disconnected from their milieus of social origin as they have for the most part forfeited their connecting force”<sup>59</sup> (Vollbrecht 1997, p. 23). Instead of milieu-related classifications of youth cultures, he proposed to regard them as leisure scenes (*Freizeitszenen*) that, as open formations, can freely be joined and left again. Lifestyles are regarded as aesthetic options that are not merely superficial habits of consumption and leisure. Furthermore, they mediate the affiliation to collective systems of values around a “good way of life” (Vollbrecht 1995, p. 24). According to Vollbrecht’s model, individuals choose and combine their lifestyles very freely from different offers. He emphasises that the development of lifestyles means conducting active and ongoing debates with a flow of cultural, social and media messages. In terms of the choice of lifestyles, young people have the opportunity to assess for themselves different youth cultures and choose different intensities of identification. Vollbrecht (1997, p. 23) would not deny the existing influence of class and milieu origins, but his approach emphasises the meaning derived from the subjective construction of expressive and aesthetic lifestyles.

With his basic focus on lifestyles, Vollbrecht (1995, p. 32) is parting from the concept of youth cultures as counter-cultural subcultures. Facing a general depoliticisation, “dehierarchisation”, deconstruction, and commercialisation of youth cultures, Baacke and Ferchhoff follow Vollbrecht’s assessment that concepts of subcultures and countercultures are no longer adequate models (Baacke and Ferchhoff 1995). Schwendter still opposes this verdict. Some 25 years after his first analysis of oppositional youth cultures, he still sees counter-cultural potential in youth cultures (Schwendter in Ferchhoff, Sander and Vollbrecht 1995, p. 11).

### → A French view: stratification and emancipation through cultural capital

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed a theoretical model about social stratification that is based on the degree of access to economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 2003). His concept also offers strong references for an

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59. The quotes that were originally in German have been translated by the author.

analysis of youth cultures. Through symbolic acts of design, like the preference for a certain kind of music, fashion, literature, film, sport, car brand or room design, every individual sets his or her distinctions (Bourdieu 2003, p. 278). The hierarchic stratification of a society is built on collective valuations of aesthetic elements as low, crude, vulgar, cheap or slavish, while others are attributed as sublime, elaborated, illustrious or distinguished (Bourdieu 2003, p. 27). Social stratification is established through shared acknowledgements of higher and lower forms of culture. The social position of a person and his or her lifestyle are, therefore, mutually and inextricably connected (Bourdieu 2003, p. 11). A certain social status leads to the development of certain cultural preferences. In return, certain forms of cultural capital are necessary to gain certain social positions and roles. Bourdieu developed habitus as an analytical term to connect these two fields. The habitus is an incorporated pattern that leads to the development of “appropriate” thoughts and actions. It leads to the realisation of a lifestyle that seems appropriate for the objective (resources) and subjective (class-specific perception and valuation) conditions of life. In this sense, the habitus is a set of mental structures that influences our thoughts and actions and, therefore, leads to the connection between the individual and the social structure.

Youth cultures offer many possibilities to gain social, cultural and economic capital that otherwise would not be accessible to young people. Firstly, young people can acquire social capital in their peer groups. Through active communication with peers and social networks, processes of mutual recognition, support and development raise the social capital of the participants. Secondly, membership in youth cultures and active fandom enables young people to open up new forms of resources that can be transferred into cultural capital (Fiske in SPoKK 1997). Through active fandom and producing activities, for example as a break-dancer, skater, computer-gamer, musician or a DJ, young people develop special knowledge and abilities. Through these activities, they gain competences that can also be used in formal settings of education and be transformed into cultural capital in Bourdieu’s sense. Thirdly, youth cultures can offer potentials for economic capital (Josties 2008). Through the organisation of communities and events and the foundation of typical youth cultural enterprises, like record labels, designer collectives or tattoo studios, young people learn many useful abilities for a modern and creative work life and, in some cases, even find the possibilities to earn a living.

The described capital can be generated through membership of youth cultures. They can be used by young people in different life contexts and offer new possibilities for social mobility. The development of new possibilities out of youth cultures can help young people to emancipate themselves and to cope with difficult life conditions and negative effects from marginal or negative social positions.

### → **Glocalisation: youth cultures within postmodern and internationalised contexts**

Through the increase of media communication and the possibilities of nearly unlimited data streams, youth cultures have become phenomena that are globally spread, but are reaching young people in their local living contexts (Roth 2002; Neumann-Braun, Schmidt and Mai 2003). However, young people do not remain passive recipients. In the sense of Roland Robertson’s term “glocalisation”, most of the global impulses of youth cultures are actively redeveloped as local variations and new creations (Neumann-Braun, Schmidt and Mai 2003, p. 82). Within electronic dance music there are clear conceptions about the typical sound of Detroit, Chicago, Berlin, Bristol, Cologne, Miami and Vienna. In the hip-hop culture the

rappers interpret different local contexts in their texts, whether American, African, European, Asian or Australian. Within most regions there are further developments; for example, the differences between the hip-hop sound of the US east and west coasts or the stylistic battles between the German hip-hop enclaves of Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt or Stuttgart show the existing range of variations.

Research about youth cultures in the late 1990s and the early 2000s describes an increasing acceleration and diversification of youth cultural innovation and societal control (McRobbie 1999; Eshun 1998; Neumann-Braun, Schmidt and Mai 2003; Holert and Terkessidis 1997; Bonz 2002; Roth and Rucht 2000; Moser 2000; Spatscheck et al. 1997). In terms of the enormous financial interests of international corporations and the great spending potential of young people, many cultural youth elements like fashion or music have become commercial goods of global cultural capitalism. Brands have become products themselves. The current objects are not relevant, but their brand names, like Nike, Adidas, Gap, Levi's, Replay or Diesel, are products that embody a certain image of lifestyle and can be sold at much higher profit margins than their actual cost of production would imply (Klein 2001).

Holert and Terkessidis (1997) describe a current trend towards a mainstream of minorities. Since the middle of the 1990s, former minority youth cultures like grunge, Brit pop, riot grrrls, nu metal, neo-punk, and certain branches of hip hop and techno, have become dominant currents in the youth cultural mainstream, though they embody controversial and counter-cultural messages. Many protagonists emanating from these scenes became popular in the dominant cultural mainstream, though in former times they would have been highly subversive figures. All these different styles exist next to each other in a remarkable unity without one dominant style leaving the others behind. This stable, pluralised coexistence of styles leads to a cultural mainstream formation built of very different but coexisting minorities. Although what is now a postmodern formation of plural minority cultures would previously have embodied emancipatory potential in the context of Fordist industrial systems, it seems no longer able to fulfil this potential within the current contexts of globalised hyper-capitalism. In the end, postmodern capitalism needs exactly the flexible, dynamic and youthful ego-tacticians that, like the members of the minority youth cultures, can flexibly reinvent themselves according to the rapid demands of change in a global culture of competition. Likewise, globalised capitalism is highly capable of controlling minority youth cultural positions commercially and politically. While protesting against the inclusive forces of the Fordist society of their parents, postmodern youngsters are in fact creating the societal and cultural foundations for post-Fordist production, communication and consumption (Hardt and Negri 2001, p. 156). From this perspective, postmodern youth has become the *avant-garde* of its own abolition (Holert and Terkessidis 1997).

From a meta-theoretical view, the "aestheticisation" of life conditions in youth cultures can only reach liberation at the aesthetic level. This does not lead to liberation at an ontological level: the current power relations remain the same. "Aestheticisations", therefore, tend to confuse ontology and epistemology.

By mistaking being with design, this even veils the conditions of power in society. A change in the relations of power would only be possible by aesthetic means if aesthetic provocations and distortions refer to persons or institutions in power and thereby lead to questioning and critique of the relations (and structures) of power. Some youth cultural groups do work in this sense and try to form a communication guerrilla to distort the power-related cultural grammar through their symbolic actions (Autonome a.f.r.i.k.a. Gruppe 1998).

Within the postmodern plurality it became possible to misuse youth cultures for rather “unemancipatory” means. The US Army tried to use the alternative pop group Blur’s track *Song 2* for a commercial campaign to launch a new stealth jet, but Blur finally stopped that attempt. The French electro-pop act Daft Punk had to go to court to fight Jacques Chirac’s attempt to use their chart hit *One more time* for his election campaign. Terkessidis and Holert (2002) show how pop music and troop concerts are used for the moral support of the US troops or even to torture imprisoned “enemies” of the United States. As youth cultural symbols become more and more arbitrary, they can easily be adopted to new contexts. With reference to right-wing skinheads, Schröder (2000) points out:

*Being a Nazi can mean a lot today: techno haircut, skinhead music, Ballermann on holiday in Mallorca, to vote for the socialist PDS, “with the Jews we always had a problem”. Or: Front-shortneck-long haircut, the rock group Böhse Onkelz, adventure holidays on Ruegen, Opel Manta, “voting is crap”. Or: Bald head, music from Nazi bard Rennicke, esoteric holidays in Stonehenge, Bolko Hoffmann and the Deutschmark. Or: Long hair with pony tail, death metal, churches.*

Beyond the characterised mainstream of minorities emerge other youth cultural currents that reach beyond the average intentions of subversion and control. There are still explicitly political youth cultures like anti-fascists, anti-neo-liberalism groups like Attac, ad busters, squatters, environmentalists, party-related youth groups and other alternative scenes. Young people still care about their rights. When changes to the Criminal Justice Bill in England in 1994 led to the prohibition of public dancing to “repetitive music,” thereby also criminalising the open-air raves and parties in the old factory halls of the cities, a big protest movement of ravers and protest groups like Reclaim the Streets was built up very quickly (Plant 1995; Hebdige 1997, 1998). Still, a number of explicitly political rock bands exist, like Chumbawamba, International Noise Conspiracy, Asian Dub Foundation, and German bands like Goldene Zitronen, Stella, Die Sterne, Superpunk and the Boxhamsters. Also, there are political electronic dance music groups like Mouse on Mars, Carsten Jost, or DAT Politics and political hip-hop acts like Saul Williams, Jan Delay, die Beginner or Curse (Karnik 2003, pp. 103ff). With bands like Chicks on Speed, Le Tigre, Peaches or Kevin Blechdom, there is an astonishing revival of feminist and gender-sensitive pop and electro-punk music that addresses gender conditions beyond heterosexual conditions of normality. Electronic dance music has begun to rediscover the concept of performativity and thereby focuses more strongly on discourses about body and gender politics (Club Transmediale and Jansen 2005). Since the days of the first independent record labels in the punk era, a multitude of independent labels still exist and offer exotic electro, punk, and hip-hop bands, a haven beyond the financial interests of the big multinational record companies (Savage 2002; Teipel 2001). Beyond often uninspiring graffiti tags, city streets also show the subversive creations of street artists or ad busters that aim to reclaim the public sphere from commercialisation with their works of symbolic and provocative meaning (see Banksy 2002; Klitzke and Schmidt 2009).

### → Youth cultures between control and emancipation: a summary

Regarding this history of ideas, the question remains whether young people can find relative independence through youth cultures or whether they are held within an ongoing process of control. This question is reminiscent of an old debate within cultural studies that moves traditionally between the theses of Horkheimer and Adorno, on one the hand, and those of Walter Benjamin on the other (see Holert and Terkessidis 1997). While Horkheimer and Adorno (1997), in their chapter about the

culture industry in the *Dialectics of enlightenment*, adopt a sceptical view that assumes constant political and cultural control of popular culture through the culture industry, Benjamin (1999), in a chapter entitled “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction”, puts forward the thesis that because of their technical reproducibility, works of art exist in a context of “de-auratisation”, which brings them nearer to the masses and offers opportunities for cultural redevelopment and self-creation.

The question of which position between public control and emancipatory self-production the youth cultures are or were located within the western European post-war era can certainly not be answered in a deterministic and final way. Rather, we find here a dialectical process that oscillates between the poles of control and emancipation, and that will continue as long as the phenomenon of power exists in our societies (Kappeler 1999). Many youth cultures were and are strongly influenced by society, state, and the culture industry and move within a strong, regulated framework. At the same time, one can discover ever new innovative movements at the fringes of youth cultures that have emancipatory impacts on the cultural and political systems.

Altogether, there emerges a highly complex situation full of contradictions with a virtually unforeseeable variety of intensities of opposition and control. In the end it seems only possible to identify individually and locally which young person with which socio-structural background from which peer group gets into which constellation of emancipation or control and can use his or her youth cultural background to cope with the controlling influences. Schäfers (1994) describes the tribalisation of youth cultures. This concept, also common in the techno culture, seems to describe current youth cultures well. Within a whole range of controlling and emancipating currents, the classification of youth cultures within a simple polarity of countercultures and part cultures cannot fully be achieved. Many scenes and peer groups relate to the more controlled part-cultural milieu, while some scenes still offer counter-cultural potential that is actively used. In summary, the motto of Roth and Rucht (2000, p. 283) seems to be apposite: “Neither rebellion nor assimilation”.

As the value of youthfulness is shared by all age groups, the creation of aesthetic difference has become much more difficult for young people. Nick Hornby (2003) remarks that it is a great challenge to listen to music that cannot be used in the next Body Shop outlet or in the next TV commercial. In this sense, young people have their youthfulness dispossessed by the adults and the marketing departments of the global companies and have to find ever new strategies to maintain their separateness.

Only in very rare cases do youth cultures explicitly follow political and revolutionary aims. The early 20th-century utopian vision of Gustav Wyneken of the first German youth movement – to form a youth culture that would improve the world through its own power of new ideas, based on deeper insights – has not been fulfilled. In recent decades, in particular, it seems to have broken up through the disillusionment of the youth cultures of the 1970s. Even under the authoritarian conditions of the Nazi dictatorship or the East German communist regime of the FDR, it became clear that most young people did not form youth cultures for revolutionary intentions but to obtain their personal and self-determined spaces of personal freedom (Spatscheck 2006). In these systems youth cultures embodied special challenges for the governments. Youth cultures enabled young people to escape the dictatorial ideologies and the public attempts to form a “state youth” (Möding and Von Plato 1986; Klönne 1986; Guse 2001; Poiger 2000; Rauhut 2002). Within both of these dictatorships the mere attempt to form a youth culture, therefore, was

itself an act of highly political relevance. In the context of postmodern Western capitalist societies, youth cultures seem to have lost this revolutionary potential to a very great extent.

Nonetheless, in youth cultures we can still find emancipatory potential directed against the “technologies of discipline” in the sense of Michel Foucault (1978, 1991). Innovative youth cultures offer alternatives to the dominant discourses – in Foucault’s sense, complexes of knowledge and power – that influence the actions of individuals in society through disciplining and normalising functions. Here, youth cultures can fulfil important functions. They support mental and real spaces of freedom that enable young people to meet needs that otherwise would not be met in the public mainstream culture. The desire to create spaces of freedom still seems to be a central motivation for the creation and existence of youth cultures. Our history shows that young people follow this desire within dire conditions of dictatorships as much as within the more open Western capitalist societies, and they tend to create ever new variations of the utopia of *All tomorrow’s parties*. In this respect, they follow a culturalistic variation of Kraftwerk’s futuristic musical motto, “It will always go on, music as carrier of ideas”.

### → Some conclusions for youth work

Passing through the different analyses on youth cultures and society, the following conclusions for youth work can be found:

1. Youth has always been connected to the idea of a protected passage or a moratorium between childhood and adulthood. This passage granted young people spaces for experiments and the development of their own ways of life. Current youth research shows that the idea of a social moratorium is vanishing because young people are growing up in a society with disembedded risks that demand them to already meet the challenges of society at an earlier age (Böhnisch and Schröder 2002). Youth work cannot release young people from these demands. But certainly youth work can provide protected spaces of temporary moratoria that enable young people to experience their personal development in an experimental way. Some of these experiments need the possibility to be risky or go wrong. Youth work needs to create settings for such experiences without adopting the “moral panics” of the adults and other institutions.
2. Youth cultures can be seen as attempts to gain individual development and liberation through aesthetic means. Youth work should meet these needs by enabling young people to get experiences of acquirement. The socio-spatial approach to youth work follows the idea of providing spaces to young people that are not “finished” but can, and need, to be acquired (Deinet and Krisch 2006). Such spaces can be created within youth clubs but also in public spaces or within especially designed events. Processes of acquirement can be valuable chances for informal education and motivated learning (Deinet and Reutlinger 2004). The research on youth cultures shows the importance of sufficient room for aesthetic expressions in such settings.
3. Youth cultures provide options for the search for the “good life”. Youth work can accompany the development of young people on their way towards becoming fully capable subjects. Scherr (1997) formulated the need for subject-oriented youth work that supports young people in their search processes and becomes an important institution for informal education and *Bildung* in the sense of supporting young people to find and reach their full potential.
4. Youth cultures can be important sources for capital and the development of the individual habitus. Youth work should therefore be open and supportive

towards youth cultures. Beyond that, youth work could clarify more clearly where it can enable young people to gain social, cultural and economic capital through processes of (in)formal education, collaboration with other institutions and enterprises, and the creation of local “landscapes of education”.

5. Youth cultures reflect the growing diversity in our societies. Neither philosophically nor practically does it seem to make sense any more to follow the idea of a leading *Leitkultur* and an “integration” under one common roof of a “national culture” (Terkessidis 2010). Instead we seem to need new agreements about how we want to live together as societies with growing differences in ethnicity, gender, class, age, abilities, sexual orientations, etc. Youth work can be a space for the common search for a culture of diversity and an actor in diversity education. To be able to assess such situations adequately, youth workers should keep Nancy Fraser’s (Fraser and Honneth 2003) demand in mind: full social justice means both the recognition of differences and redistribution of resources. Following these ideas, the youth work profession might look for a theory and practice of a rights-based youth work that follows the ideas of human rights and social development (Ife 2001, 2009) and aims to support a balance of rights and duties in our societies.

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*Niels Elberling*

## **The quest for peace, democracy and sociocultural development**

### **→ Introduction**

**Y**outh clubs were invented because the bushes in the Kalahari Desert are less than 1.50 metres tall. The British army needed scouts who could locate the Boers' artillery during the second Boer war, 1899-1902. Colonel (later General) Baden-Powell decided to recruit the eldest sons of aristocratic families in England. They were the right size and risked being victims of hunting accidents, since the eldest son inherited everything: money, estate and title. So, the younger brothers often mistook their elder brother for a deer while hunting.

In southern Africa, scouting was popular since the young boys could hide behind the bushes. But the boys could not scout all the time. In their leisure time, they caused problems, upsetting the officers. Consequently, Baden-Powell invented a series of activities of a cultural nature. These activities were based on the traditions of the upper classes. It served the British army, since the eldest sons of aristocratic families often tried to get commissions as officers. The non-commissioned officers in South Africa from middle- or working-class backgrounds invented clubs for boys in order to maintain and develop a working-class culture.

## → Youth clubs in the UK

Second eldest sons in better-off families settled in the growing cities. Many studied to become priests, and their mothers bought apartments in the working-class areas, so that they had a place to live. The would-be priests took pity on the children who lived in such poor conditions in the area and opened their homes to them during their limited leisure time. Such institutions in apartments were called “settlements” and had a clear social aim.

At the same time in England there was a move to create clubs for girls – mainly those employed in domestic duties. The initiative came (mostly) from the employers who were concerned that the young girls should not have their morals tainted in the little leisure time they were given. These girls should not, it was thought, succumb to temptation in their free time.

These initiatives, one for boys, one for girls, led to the creation of a large number of both girls’ and boys’ clubs, and eventually mixed clubs. In fact, three different initiatives came together: the boys’ clubs, the girls’ clubs and the settlements (that accepted both sexes from the very beginning). The settlements could not survive in large numbers due to a lack of volunteers and benefactors in the long run. Mixed clubs were established when people realised that no activity could compete with boys’ and girls’ interest in each other. Obviously, there was a great push in that direction on the part of young people themselves. In 1910 the world’s first national association of youth clubs was formed (namely, the National Association of Girls’ Clubs and Mixed Clubs – some boys’ clubs insisting on remaining single-sexed).

The purpose was cultural and social – and the two are intertwined: no club with a social objective (such as fighting juvenile delinquency) could survive without cultural activities. This works both ways. If a youth club were established with the aim of fighting juvenile delinquency, substance abuse or even youth unemployment, it soon became clear that the reason for young people to join the club on a regular basis would be its range of cultural activities and to a lesser extent adult contact. On the other hand, if a club were created by idealistic lovers of music, theatre or sports, they soon discovered how the general social climate among young people in the neighbourhood improved because of the youth clubs’ activities.

## → Club-based versus community-based approaches

In France there was a strong desire to maintain and develop French culture and language. This feeling was particularly strong after the 1870 Franco-German war, strengthening after the First World War. It was one of the factors that led to the creation of the MJsCs (Maisons des Jeunes et de la Culture), a nationwide open youth work initiative. As in the UK, the French discovered the benefits – in social terms – of inviting young people to join cultural activities. In 1875, the French Minister for Culture, seeking to instil French language and culture in young people, established the first youth and cultural houses in France. Apparently, at that time there was a fear that German language and culture might conquer a large part of France. This move towards youth work was to counteract this possibility.

The English and French youth clubs were established to meet the same needs and desires, namely the education of the working class, and thereby to contribute to a “national” culture. But very soon in both countries, and certainly after the Second

World War, youth clubs were established in order to control young people and modify their behaviour in certain ways (especially those involved in violence, substance abuse, gang activity, vandalism, etc.). The method employed was different, however; whilst in the UK the initiatives were club based (think of the gentlemen's clubs), in France the core idea was that of the community centre.<sup>60</sup>

These two approaches subsequently spread to the respective French and English-oriented countries. The club-based concept was prominent in Ireland, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada and the United States. The French community concept inspired the establishment of MJC's in Wallonia, Flanders, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and even in some former French colonies in North Africa.

The origin of each institution is obvious from its name. The first approach comprised terms such as *Ungd.klubber*, *fritidsklubber*, *fritidsgårdar*, youth clubs, etc. The other was composed of, for example, *Jugendhaus*, *Jeugdhuis* and *Jugendzentrum*.

National associations were formed in most countries – in the UK in 1910, some eight years later in France and in 1942 in Denmark. There was no connection between them, and they did not even know of each other's existence.

### → International networks

In the aftermath of the Second World War, there was a strong desire to develop democratic behaviour among young people so as to put an end to fascism. In 1945, there was a world youth conference in London organised by the UN upon a proposal by Winston Churchill, who wanted to ensure that young people (particularly in Europe) would learn to organise themselves in order to participate in democracy – and turn away from dictatorship and totalitarian regimes. It was here that the World Federation of Democratic Youth was formed (WFDY). It was thought that the WFDY could serve as an umbrella organisation for all types of youth organisations around the globe. The national youth councils were expected to form the basis of the WFDY. All the European national youth councils later joined the Council of European National Youth Councils (CENYC). Unfortunately, the communists were far better organised amongst themselves than the weak (western) youth organisations. So they “hijacked” the WFDY by electing their members to the WFDY executive committee – and presenting the assembly with a number of anti-American and anti-British resolutions.

A new UN conference was held in Canterbury in 1947, where another concept for a world youth organisation was created. In the two years that had passed since the London conference, youth organisations in the west were far better prepared, and a new world youth organisation was created: the World Assembly of Youth

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60. A community centre has no membership, only participants. You do not pay a membership fee – only an entrance fee. The youth club requires membership and a monthly due. Many young people resent this since membership lists are passed on to the authorities – particularly in countries that subsidise youth clubs' running costs. In countries (or areas) where young people generally trust the authorities, club membership is not a problem, but in other countries where young people traditionally distrust the authorities, there are very few (or no) clubs – and youth centres or “houses” instead. The term “community centre” (rather than youth centre) indicates that the facility may be used by all age groups in the area.

(WAY).<sup>61</sup> In Westminster Hall, the WAY Charter was adopted by 400 participants from 25 UN member countries. Youth club representatives from the UK, Denmark and Belgium were particularly active in promoting WAY. WAY too had its original membership base in the national youth councils, and it worked quite well up until the mid-1960s when it was discovered that WAY had received some funding either from – or via – the CIA. At that point, all CENYC member councils withdrew from WAY. WAY then established separate “national WAY committees” in many (but far from all) European countries.

The desire to develop young people’s aspirations and qualifications in order for them to participate in the democratic process was very strong in the youth club movements, though mostly at local and national level, and internationally only in WAY. Councils, committees and various assemblies of members became part of daily life in youth clubs – all established with a view to develop democratic skills in young people. Since the proposal to create a world youth organisation was British – although strongly supported by the US – the concept of democracy was very Anglo-American (and as such concentrated on democratic skills for the free individual, opposing, in particular, fascist and communist-collectivist approaches). This view was generally accepted by most youth organisations in most countries up until the late 1960s and early 1970s when new forms for democracy were developed and tried out. In the youth clubs for example, the club councils (young club members elected by the membership to decide on activities and the daily running of the club) were replaced by a weekly general meeting of all members or a large number of committees with specific tasks. But, first and foremost, a strong and heated discussion of the role and responsibility of the youth club leader and his/her workers vis-à-vis the young people took place.

With the cold war, came an interest in campaigning for peace and disarmament.

## → Denmark – an example of development

### **From youth clubs to children’s clubs?**

Between 1942 and 1960 youth clubs in Denmark were financially supported – to the tune of 85% of their total costs – by either the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Social Affairs. In 1960 there were around 700 youth clubs (for those aged between 14 and 18) in a country with less than 5 million inhabitants.

In 1964, Denmark established leisure time clubs for children (aged between 7 and 14). Unfortunately, the main aim here was to save money. Denmark had crèches for children aged up to 3, kindergartens for those between 3 and 7, and leisure time clubs for schoolchildren aged between 7 and 14. The latter, however, were very expensive, since they had a large number of trained pedagogues, very well-paid leaders, and their own buildings and facilities, the standard of which were specified in law. By opening the youth clubs during afternoon hours – and by introducing a whole new institution (namely, the leisure time club) – local authorities (municipalities) could save quite a lot of money. This was the beginning of their downfall. The problem was that youth clubs and leisure time clubs shared the same buildings, facilities and staff. A child having spent each afternoon with the same adults in the same rooms and with the same activities did not find it very appealing to continue after the age of 14, with the only difference

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61. Both the WFDY and WAY still exist today. WAY has its secretariat in Asia (Malaysia) and the WFDY in Budapest.

being that they could attend in the evening instead of the afternoons. Also, staff members found it more attractive to carry out the bulk of their working hours in daytime, leaving the youth club duty in the evenings to the inexperienced, newly employed or even part-time workers.

In 1976 there were 1 200 clubs and the scene was still growing. However, there were far more leisure time clubs than youth clubs (more than 65% of all clubs). Members started to leave clubs by the ages of 16 or 17. In 2000 there were 1 300 clubs, but 80% of them catered exclusively for children.

### **Professionalisation and its downsides**

Denmark soon entered an era of professionalisation of youth club work. The Danish Association of Youth Clubs was responsible for state-recognised education of (youth) club workers from 1958 onwards. In 1970, this developed into a three-year degree. With formal education came increased competence, better documentation of the work undertaken, a trade union for club workers, standard salaries in line with others in the public sector, and professional secrecy. At the same time, there was an obligation for youth workers to inform the police and the social authorities about criminal behaviour, drug addiction, vandalism, gang activity and fencing of stolen property. They also had to inform the school authorities about truants or young people who regularly missed doing their homework or cheated by copying other pupils' work. The youth club worker rapidly changed from being seen by young people as an adult friend – to being seen as part of the “system” and a representative of authority. There were other downsides as well. For example: the trade union negotiated a bonus for club workers when accompanying members on a weekend excursion. This was laid down in a general agreement between the youth club workers' union and the state; unfortunately, it was referred to as “compensation for the inconvenience”. Some club members read the text and exclaimed, “So we seem to be an inconvenience! Well, don't bother. We can go alone!” In addition, buildings, furniture and equipment were standardised for financial reasons, leaving the members with the impression that the fun had gone.

Denmark's youth clubs never managed to overcome these problems, and when the youth club workers' union merged with the much larger union for pedagogues working in crèches, kindergartens and other daycare centres, the whole sector became institutionalised. The pedagogues went directly from Danish secondary schools to university and took a bachelor in pedagogy. The club workers came from ordinary jobs. Many were artists or crafts people, having started to work in a youth club with no pedagogical training. Later, they could get such training, but alongside their work and not at a university. Pedagogues worked mainly full time, youth club workers often part time, keeping their other job. This meant that youth club workers knew exactly how the labour market worked. Pedagogues usually had no experience of “real life”. That was fine when working with small children, but not with youth. When the unions merged, many pedagogues looked for extra hours in the youth clubs, or a convenient work schedule, based on their family needs. Often, it was very difficult for a pedagogue to understand how work with teenagers had to be different from that with small children.

One last point worth mentioning is that youth clubs also failed to handle gangs of rockers and young immigrants. Both youth club workers and the traditionally trained pedagogues found the immigrants and the rockers too difficult to work with. Fear entered the clubs. Violence was no longer a matter of fists, but of weapons. So the clubs excluded the rockers and even the immigrants (more or less). It is



regrettable, but at the same time understandable, that people prefer to work with nice kids from nice families rather than with hoodlums and hooligans.

## → The European Confederation of Youth Clubs (ECYC)

### **The eventful foundation of the ECYC**

Within the Danish Association of Youth Clubs we thought we had invented the concept of a youth club. We wanted to spread the gospel, so we went to the UK in 1975, and only then did we discover how many youth clubs had existed there (and in many other countries) long before those in Denmark.

We agreed with the NAYC (National Association of Youth Clubs in the UK) that there was a need to convince the youth club organisations that there were advantages – rather than problems – in creating an umbrella organisation, a European confederation of youth club organisations.

The inaugural general assembly of this confederation was held in the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen in September 1976. The French and the UK wings of the movement were well represented. In the preparatory committee we had decided to allow only one national association per country. In France, however, there were two: UNIREG and the FFMJC. The FFMJC was larger and politically moderate, whereas UNIREG was closer to the Communist Party at the time. There was a clear social democratic majority among the leaders of the national youth club organisations at the time. Since the FFMJC was oriented towards social democracy, and UNIREG (Union Regionale des MJC) towards communism, there was a clear understanding that the FFMJC should be our French organisation. Having agreed to the statutes, I (being chairperson of the General Assembly) asked the organisations in alphabetical order if they would sign up for membership. The FFMJC did so, and that prohibited UNIREG from becoming member. The two Belgian organisations constituted another problem. We accepted both the Flemish and Walloon organisations by agreeing that in one country there might be more than one nation. Having agreed that, we immediately received a demand from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland for separate membership. No decision was reached on the latter question, and I believe it still remains unresolved.

### **The aims of the ECYC**

It was our aim to offer young people a genuine international experience. Charter travel was common even among working-class people in many countries. We offered a club-to-club exchange programme. During my 12 years as Secretary General of the ECYC, we organised for more than 25 000 young people per year to take part in week-long club-to-club exchanges. We even chartered a DC7 jet plane for two summers and called it ECYC Airlines.

We also organised seminars on important social and political issues: youth unemployment, democracy in the youth club, equal opportunities for young women and men, cultural activities with an international dimension, etc. We discussed the role of the club workers in crime prevention. We also organised discussions on pedagogical methods when dealing with conflict groups, on teaching music in youth clubs, etc. This is definitely the point at which new, more focused youth work initiatives saw the light of day. Youth music clubs, youth amateur art clubs, youth sports clubs, youth nature clubs, etc. Many clubs hired very professional musicians and other artists, and in fact many of the popular pop and rock groups

(some of which gained an international reputation) can be traced back to youth clubs. That is most certainly true for the UK.

My report to the 1988 General Assembly stated that we had held 16 seminars with 584 participants over a total of 82 days. We also had seven larger research projects. ECYC's research projects all looked inwards at the clubs: how they were organised in the various countries and regions, how they were they financed, attendance levels, how they were dealing with programmes on youth unemployment, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, mobbing and exclusion, how they were evaluating their activities, whether boys and girls had an equal share in the decision-making process, and how youth club workers were trained. We never – unlike the student organisations – looked at broader and more general questions, like: peace and disarmament, education, the environment and North-South dialogue.

In 1985, together with our American colleagues, we invited almost 3 000 youth club workers from 125 countries to a world conference in Chicago on issues concerning assisting young people in developing their own identity and personality. In 1988, we had less funding, and we could not pay the travel costs of delegations from Africa and the Far East, so unlike in 1985 there were no representatives from those areas. In Chicago we arranged a second world conference to deal with the growing Aids problem. Some 2 500 people from 101 countries participated on that occasion.

The ECYC rapidly became an important member of the EYF, EYC, ECB, YOUTH FORUM, UNESCO, New York Caucus (UN) and thus played a role at European and world level in discussing youth-related issues and influencing youth policy.

### **The ECYC today?**

In the beginning other youth organisations tried to label the ECYC a youth service organisation, thereby trying to keep us away from Council of Europe funding. It took a lot of lobbying to get the ECYC accepted as a youth organisation proper. This happened in 1977, and has never been a problem since. The ECYC was and still is an umbrella organisation for national youth club organisations, presently with 2.2 million members, with a large number of countries represented. Nowadays, a significant proportion of eastern European countries are members.

The ECYC has never obtained the same degree of political influence as the CENYC or the political youth organisations; neither has it achieved the same status as the Scouts, WAGGGS, YMCA and others, nor produced research or documentaries like the student organisations, but it is still one of the largest youth movements in Europe.

The ECYC moves slowly but surely forward; you cannot transform a pig into a racehorse, but you can make it a very fast pig.



## **Geopolitics of youth policy in post-war western Europe, 1945-67<sup>62</sup>**

*Giuseppe Porcaro*

**T**he genesis of the institutional landscape of European youth movements is a fascinating field of research which has still to be completely discovered although when it is, it will open up interesting reflections on various fields: from the history of European integration to the evolution of social movements, from the rise of a transnational civil society at continental and global level to the changing notion of citizenship. The list goes on.

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62. This is only a seminal contribution that requires more research on this specific historical period, as well as greater research on the past 60 years of the history of European youth movements and youth policy. I will not give an extensive bibliography but some guiding references. Concerning the role of youth movements in the building of the modern nation state it is worth reading the works of George Mosse on the nationalisation of the masses. On the European Youth Campaign very little has been written so far, but it is detectable in many books on the history of European Movement International. A lot of information is also included in the archives of the CENYC, which are hosted at the European University Institute in Florence.

In this short article I sketch out an approach that combines history with political geography. In particular, I outline how the emergence of a European youth policy field has been influenced by the power relations embedded in the system of international relations. At the same time, I describe how, almost paradoxically, this geopolitical situation laid the basis for the consolidation of an independent youth civil society as one of the main features of the youth policy landscape in Europe.

This is only a first attempt to approach this issue from this perspective. In this respect, it constitutes predominantly a seminal work that requires further intellectual and historical investigation.

### → (re)Construction

The initial youth organisations, which emerged in Germany towards the end of the 19th century as marginal social movements to counter the problems of society during the reign of Wilhelm II but which lacked a political agenda for reform, gradually became – in the first half of the 20th century, under the influence of the more disciplinary British youth movements – engaged in the national politics of societal reform. As they became powerful elements of mass culture, their political importance culminated in the 1930s with their adoption by the modern state. In their efforts to influence society through the practices of hiking and camping, the youth movements in pre-Second World War Europe can be understood as key elements in the project of modern governance, employing the cultural meanings of landscape and community to mobilise youth at national level, and to eventually reproduce them as governable subjects.

This incorporation by the modern nation state of youth movements led to political distortions and manipulations that became evident after the Second World War. Lessons were drawn from the most evident cases of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, but also from the incorporation of youth movements in the Soviet regime and its satellites. In this context, it is not surprising that most of the western European governments pulled out of an active engagement in youth policy development and left the field to youth organisations themselves.

At the same time, something was happening at international level: the incorporation of youth organisations by the system of international relations. In London, in 1945, youth movements from the states signatories to the United Nations Charter formed the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). However, the dream of a unified world youth constituency suddenly collapsed with the beginning of the cold war. Almost all western organisations pulled out of the WFDY due to its association with Soviet-aligned socialist and communist parties. In 1948 a World Assembly of Youth (WAY) was established, this time only with those movements that were outside the Soviet sphere of influence. Clearly, this established two sides in international youth affairs, reflecting the geopolitical reality of the time. International youth work was definitely in the realm of foreign policy, and youth organisations became sensitive actors and forerunners in keeping channels of contact open between the two sides.

### → Campaigning for Europe

The missing element in this first period was Europe. Europe was a scale under construction (and still is). First of all, it was divided. So, it was also entirely immersed in the logic of the cold war. However, the European project was about to make its

first steps and from European Movement International and the World Assembly of Youth itself came the first big wave of Europeanisation of youth organisations: namely, the European Youth Campaign.

This campaign, launched in 1951, supported a series of conferences, cultural events, and youth organisations aiming to promote a European identity among youth from all over the (western) part of the continent. The campaign was funded as part of post-war reconstruction by the American Committee on United Europe, again in the context of the cold war, to consolidate western European democracies and co-operation within the “free” Europe. The campaign was definitely a success, not only for disseminating books, organising events and creating a cultural breeding ground for European co-operation, but also because it created the conditions for the creation of the first European youth platform.

The Council of European National Youth Committees (CENYC) was founded on 23 March 1963 in London as a voluntary association of 11 national committees of the World Assembly of Youth (WAY) (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom) and the two national youth councils of France and Luxembourg. Italy and Switzerland participated at the founding meeting, but only decided later to participate in the CENYC. The principal tasks of the CENYC were to serve as a forum for the exchange of information, to collect and study material concerning youth problems, to co-operate and obtain assistance from organisations and institutions active in the field of youth work and education, and to support national youth committees in activities aiming at European unification. The creation of the CENYC constituted a bridge towards the next phase of development of European youth policy. On the one hand, it ensured co-ordination among “western” national youth platforms in the framework of the WAY and, on the other hand, it crystallised two important principles: firstly, the independence of national youth councils from their governments (this would become one of the pillars of the youth sector in civil society); secondly, the institutional dialogue with the new European institutions – one of the first resolutions of the CENYC, back in 1964, asked the Council of Europe to create a European youth centre.

### → The young, the student and the CIA

By the mid-1960s the system of youth policy in Europe was quite consolidated, although it was to be severely tested on 15 February 1967, when the *New York Times* published a short but explosive article entitled “Foundations linked to C.I.A. are found to subsidize 4 other youth organisations”. Nothing really new was revealed, but it was now public. In particular, the article showed how the Foundation for Youth and Students Affairs was subsidising the World Assembly of Youth, the United States Youth Council and the International Student Conference (the western counterpart of the Soviet-led International Student Union).

The revelations of the *New York Times* soon crossed the Atlantic. Neither European governments nor youth organisations could stay silent on the matter. Most youth organisations wanted to clearly mark their distance and their independence from CIA funding. This resulted in the first disempowerment of WAY and the consolidation of the CENYC as an independent self-funded platform.

European governments, which had hitherto resisted getting seriously involved with international youth policy, started to play a more proactive role. Youth was suddenly rediscovered as a crucial actor. This was not only as a consequence of the

confrontation between East and West and the role played by youth groups. Only a few months after the CIA affair, students and young people were marching on the streets – it was 1968, the year of student demonstrations. The “youth issue” was now definitely a priority for national policy as well.

These years were a turning point towards a new phase. A European youth policy was about to be set up (with different approaches) by the Council of Europe and, a little later on, by the European Communities. However, the cold war continued to play a crucial role until the end of the 1980s. East–West relations were one of the main areas of concern of the pan-European youth dialogue that was developed after the Helsinki Agreement in the mid-1970s. But this time, the western Europeans were definitely acting more independently from the United States than in the earlier phase, where we saw their direct intervention and support.

### → (partial) Conclusions

What is the point of looking back at what happened 60 years ago? There are several lessons that we can already draw from this short introduction.

First, this historical overview reminds us that investments (or a lack of) in the youth sector are strategic choices for governments and institutions. This should, in my opinion, act as a reminder to these actors to continue giving the necessary support to youth civil society, especially during a period of individualisation of public life. Second, this episode traces the origin of a dialectic between the actors and the origin of an independent youth civil society, which is now, decades later, institutionalised and rebalanced. In particular, it stands at the very beginning of a path that would lead to the creation of the European Youth Forum in 1996. Last, but not least, it shows how youth policy had and still has a role in challenging the concept of nation state, contributing to the creation of a European dimension.

I think these three lessons are important today in strategically planning the future of youth work and youth policy in Europe. In a period of economic crisis, young people are becoming more and more the subjects of policy making: they become policy consumers, not policy producers. The recent launch of the European Commission’s flagship initiative, Youth on the Move, is an example of this trend. Participatory youth work is at risk, and investments in participation and the youth sector in civil society might be sidelined to the advantage of other important priorities. In this situation, the delicate balance among actors could easily breakdown only to be replaced by state-oriented top-down policies. It is perhaps time for courageous decisions. Notwithstanding the difference in scale, the positive contribution to European societies by independent youth organisations is definitely as strong and strategic as it was 60 years ago.

# **The origins and development of open youth centres and their operating characteristics in Flanders**

*Willy Faché*

## **→ Introduction**

As a manifestation of open youth work, youth centres did not develop in Flanders until 1952. By that time, youth clubs and youth centres already existed in the Netherlands, the UK, Germany and France, which inspired their subsequent development in Flanders. In the 1960s, open youth work flourished in Flanders. A first important milestone in the evolution of youth centre work is 1973. The subsidy scheme of 1973 launched professionalisation. The scheme also promoted, for the first time, differentiation of youth centre work according to the functions it fulfils for young people. It is also the year in which the age limit for entry to dance halls was lowered from 18 to 16, which caused youth centres to lose their monopoly in the leisure activities of young people. It effectively halted the flourishing of youth centres.

The next milestone in the development of youth centres is 1993, when Flemish youth work policy was decentralised. From that moment on, youth centres were no longer subsidised by the central government, but by the municipalities. This created greater differentiation in youth centre work. This chapter deals with the birth of youth centre work in the 1950s and further developments up to the 1980s.



## → Origins in the post-war period

After the Second World War youth workers and educators became worried about the negative influence of the leisure industry on the moral development of young people. A so-called third educational environment (along with the family and school) was designed to protect youth in their leisure time. The emerging generation was thought to need protection from a mentality of consumption and a commercialised leisure industry (Kriekemans 1950). According to pedagogues, uniformed youth organisations were best suited to protecting youth in their leisure time. That is why the youth as a whole are susceptible to being recruited by the youth movement. Every young person is considered to be a potential member (Kriekemans 1950). The youth movement, as well as its membership numbers, both in Belgium and abroad, experienced explosive growth in the period between the two world wars. This growth was not slowed down by the Second World War, and initially continued afterwards (Cammaer 1969). It is important to note that only the youth movement was considered to be an organisation form for young people that presented an added value; other organisations were not. This view on youth work is also expressed by the government's youth policy. This rigorous idealisation of youth organisations constructed a category of "unorganised youth". Even members of sports club or a music group, who were not members of a youth movement, were labelled as unorganised young people (also unattached youth, intangible youth, unreachable youth, mass youth, antisocial youth, young people with adjustment difficulties). The classification as member or non-member of a youth movement resulted in stereotypes. The unorganised distinguished themselves from the organised by specific, common characteristics that were considered deficient in some way. Moreover, the concern about unorganised young people focused on the working class, mainly urban young workers. We find similar classifications in neighbouring countries at about the same time. During this period, the 15 July 1960 Act on the moral protection of youth, the so-called Dance Act, was passed. This act stipulated that it was prohibited for anyone who had not reached the age of 18 to stay in dance halls and drinking-houses while there was dancing going on, if this minor was not accompanied by his/her father, mother, guardian or other person responsible for their surveillance.

In Belgium, the youth movement appeared to enjoy a monopolistic position in the complementary educational environment, although in actual fact it never reached more than 30-40% of young people after the Second World War. As a consequence, the majority of youth were unorganised. The flourishing of youth movements after the Second World War did not last long and was followed by a large change, in particular in the 16+ age category. The reality that the youth movement did not actually reach the "mass" of young people was initially attributed to the fact that there were simply categories of young people that lagged behind, who were not yet ready for the idealistic youth movement methodology. This so-called "crisis in the youth movement" also took place in neighbouring countries (Jousselin 1959; Rosenmayr 1964).

Another possible cause of this crisis was to be found in the lack of qualified youth leaders to "save the numerous young people who are unfortunately still running free" (Van Haegendoren 1946, p. 16). In order to solve this problem, the Interdepartmental Youth Commission and the National Youth Council (1959) in Belgium proposed, in their joint report to the government, to put members of the teaching staff at the disposal of youth movements, a proposal that was not included in an act until 1965. In the 1950s, youth workers started to realise that not all young people were susceptible to being recruited by the youth movement. Although, in the late 1950s,

the question was raised as to whether the youth movements were outmoded, the dichotomy of youth in organised and unorganised youth remained.

### → Organising the unorganised?

Although unorganised youth became the object of numerous specific policy measures and provisions in all western and northern European countries, it is remarkable how little attention was paid to a critical analysis of the supposed distinction between organised and unorganised young people. The distinction between organised and unorganised young people is irrelevant for youth policy. Faché (1977) examined to what extent so-called unorganised youth are “organisationally intangible”. He examined this by means of a representative sample of 14-22-year-old unmarried young people living in Flemish cities of more than 50 000 inhabitants. Some 90% of the young people appeared to have participated at some time in the activities of one or other organisation; which means that most of the so-called unorganised young people had participated at some time in an organisation.

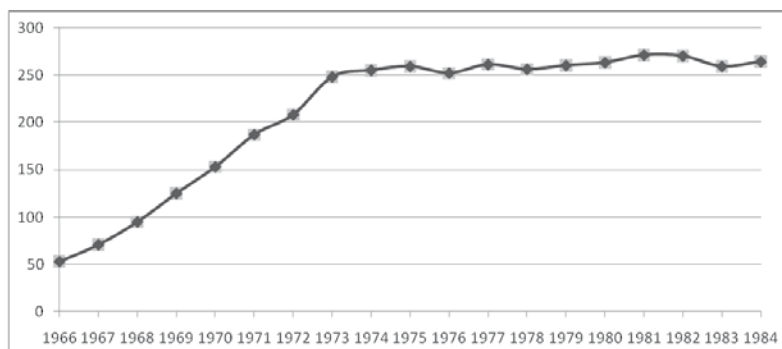
Nevertheless, new youth work forms were intended to reach the so-called “intangible young people”. In the 1950s and early 1960s, youth centre work was championed. It was considered as “youth work par excellence” for the unorganised in Flanders (Peeters 1963; Cammaer 1969). The first youth centre was founded by the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in Antwerp. Other centres were initiated later by Catholic youth movements (Chiro, see Baeten in this volume, and the Scout movement). Some Catholic youth movements even demanded a monopoly on action for the benefit of unorganised youth (Cammaer 1969). The same phenomenon was reported in other countries as well (UNESCO 1955).

This new form of youth work could soon count on official recognition and support in Flanders. In 1958, the National Youth Council drew up an inventory of all youth centre initiatives and formulated criteria for the support of youth centres. The National Youth Council organised study visits to youth centres in France, the Netherlands and Germany. In 1960, the first youth centres were supported by the Ministry of Public Education.

### → Rapid growth followed by stagnation

Youth centre work grew very rapidly, as is indicated, for instance, by the number of recognised youth centres, which doubled every three years, as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Number of subsidised youth centres (1966-84) (Abbeloos 2007)**



The strong growth in youth centre work in the second half of the 1960s was not only the result of governmental support. The above-mentioned Dance Act (1960) provided youth centres with almost a monopolistic position within the field of leisure activities for minors. According to this act, non-commercial initiatives were not covered by it. This gave youth centres a monopolistic position in the organisation of dance parties.

The figure above shows that the number of recognised youth centres stagnated from 1973 onwards. This is the year in which the 1960 Dance Act was amended and applied only to young people under 16 instead of under 18.

According to the Flemish Youth Centre Federation, there is even a gradual relapse which lasted until 1993. At that moment, youth centre work clearly enjoyed a revival that coincided with the decentralisation of youth work policy. From that moment onwards, the youth centres were subsidised by the municipalities (9 June 1993 Act of the Flemish Parliament).

### → Educational views within youth centre work

In the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, the first youth centre initiatives originated in the youth movements, which also felt responsible for the unorganised youth. It is therefore not surprising that educational views about youth centre work, during this initial period, came from the youth movement scene. Some authors argued that the strong community, which the youth movement was, should form the heart of the broader youth centre community (Peeters 1963; Van Roey 1963; Janssens 1963; Katholieke Jeugdraad 1964).

The youth movements were imbued with an ideology of protection, assuming that young people had to be protected from the dangers of consumption and a commercialised leisure industry. In order to reach unorganised youth, research on youth centres by Cammaer, Regal and Wauters (1966) concluded that youth work forms such as the open-door system in youth centres were necessary. In this drop-in work form, “the binding element is reduced to the bare minimum and these young people do not have to obey many orders” (translated by the author). This drop-in system took shape in mass events (such as the dance party), the disco-bar, the reading corner.

In the 1960s, there were two main viewpoints as regards this open-door system. The first view held that the drop-in approach would serve as a “trap” for unorganised youth and would make them participate in less free-of-engagement activities, and would possibly bring them into contact with the youth movements (Van Roey 1963; Katholieke Jeugdraad 1964). This view also prevailed in Dutch and German youth centres (Hoebink 1966). A second view considered that dance parties and other drop-in activities within youth centres had an intrinsic value, allowing young people to have co-educational and non-committal encounters in an educational atmosphere that promoted social interaction and friendships (Claus 1965; Wouters 1969).

All authors at the time were convinced that youth centres must offer more than a place for encounters and leisure activities for boys and girls. The term “(social) education” is often used, although the concept remains unspecified. This social education could be realised through a “social group work” methodology, which was developed in the United States.

The perspective of young people is slightly different. On the basis of apprenticeship reports by social assistants, Abbeloos (2007) states that young people mainly went

to the youth centre to dance. We suppose this motivation was especially the case in the years between 1960 and 1973, as a result of the Dance Act (see above).

### → The potential functions of a youth centre

By the end of the 1960s, youth researchers started to pay attention to the (potential) functions of youth centre work from the perspective of young people themselves – an attention to the functions that youth centres have for young people. According to the Dutch youth sociologist Van Hessen (1964), family, school and work are domains in which a major part of youth life takes place. Next to, if not exactly opposed to these domains, the young person maintains and cultivates a proper domain, designated by Van Hessen as the “third” social environment. This environment is the place par excellence “to be young together”. There is no dominance of older people as there is in the family or school. One could say that wherever there is a place for adults in this third social environment, in more than incidental encounters with young people, the term “youth work” can be used. According to Van Hessen, youth work thus lies in a double perspective. The first is one of “*being young together*”, that is to be realised by youth, whereas the second is one of “*certain intentions*” that also have to be realised. This view starts from the premise that interference by an adult may give a certain tenor and shape to this group life in the third environment, which results in an “educational” effect on the participants. Whether youth work aims at far-reaching objectives, or rather takes up more modest tasks situated closer to home, it will never be identical to just being young together. The concretisation of this added intention from the world of the non-young with regard to being young together leads to a constant search for and attempt to harmonise both optima.

The youth centre may, for some young people, fulfil the function of an environment in which they have the possibility to “be young together”. An environment that enables non-committal encounters and casual social activities, through the presence of a bar and sitting area, a reading corner, a disco corner, a dance party. The typical atmosphere is one without obligations in which young people are free to come and go. But a youth centre differs from a youth cafe or dancing (where being young together is also possible), because of the other functions a youth centre can fulfil for young people. A youth centre is predisposed to have various functions, but the staff, the interest shown by young people, the infrastructural possibilities and so on determine to what extent this predisposition can develop. Faché (1969) summed up the following functions:

- initiation in leisure activities and qualified assistance in deepening of certain activities;
- mastery of certain skills and knowledge as required by many leisure activities (for example, photography, nature exploration, playing the guitar, recreational sports, and so on). A youth centre may offer the possibility to acquire these necessary skills and knowledge under qualified supervision;
- space and material facilities for entrepreneurial young people;
- the possibility, for instance, to repair a moped, to construct a radio or a go-cart, to develop and enlarge self-made photographs, to exhibit paintings or sculptures, etc;
- provision of information and assistance to young people.

Youth centre work is usually classified as sociocultural work. This is why assistance, welfare or care in youth centre work is not mentioned. Nevertheless, the youth centre leader is often one of those confidential advisers to whom young

people can ask personal questions. They are often confronted with young people who are in immediate need of help or have existential questions and problems they cannot solve. Most of the time, young people do not know whom they can turn to if they have any questions, or are shy about appealing to a welfare centre. Apart from information concerning the personal problems of young people, the youth centre can also systematically disseminate information about topical social issues. This information is a prerequisite for the participation of young people in a rapidly evolving society.

### → Youth work as a factor in social change

In the course of the 1970s, youth centres increasingly started to fulfil other functions, in particular the stimulation and support of youngsters in developing their own ideas about the future of society, their involvement in social change and social action, and in the development of a municipal youth policy. This development was stimulated by three different sources.

1. The first source is the function of counselling and support. Youth problems become apparent in the life of the individual, but the causes of these problems are not always initially bound to the individual. The problems of young people are frequently rooted in the society in which they live (for example, shortcomings in working, housing, school and leisure environments), and not in individual inadequacies. In other words, many of the problems that young people may experience are in fact collective as opposed to exclusively individual problems.
2. A second source lies in the societal evolutions and phenomena of the time (unemployment, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy).
3. A third source were the social movements that certain youth centres belonged to.

The critical youth leader made his/her entry also as a result of the professionalisation of youth centre work (Faché 1974).

This evolution in youth centre work is related to changing views on the role of youth in society and the collective emancipation of young people. Youth became a factor in social change (Mahler 1982; Hartmann and Trnka 1985).

However, the number of youth centres committing themselves to supporting young people in their participation in social action and social movements remained limited. In August 1974, the socialist Manfred Janssens reacted sharply against what he called the non-committal attitude within youth centres and their lack of commitment. A youth centre should prioritise social action and not give priority to recreation (Abbeloos 2007).

### → The role of public authorities and “pillarisation”

All youth centres originated from private initiatives. This is the logical outcome of the fact that, in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, youth work is based on the subsidiarity principle, which states that the role of the government is subsidiary to that of private initiative. Thus, authorities have to respect and encourage spontaneous private initiative; and, secondly, have to intervene only when the initiative does not come forth spontaneously, or when it is not up to the task required. In practice, the function and responsibilities of the government in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium were restricted to granting financial support to private initiatives. This can be explained by the fact that in Belgium, the major political parties are opposed, for different reasons, to state initiatives in the domain of social policy.

Education, health care, social work and sociocultural work were all originally organised on the basis of private initiative, mainly by the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike the situation in the Netherlands, where several religious communities each act for their part of the population, Flanders only has one so-called initiating organisation, that is the Roman Catholic Church, which holds an actual monopolistic position. In the transition to the 20th century, a socialist and liberal political pillar were established next to the Catholic pillar. Flemish “pillarisation” did not take place among the different religious communities, but between the religious (mainly coinciding with the Catholic) community and the non-religious community, on the one hand, and along the socio-economic dividing line (socialist and liberal), on the other (Roelandt 1985). At the time, youth centre work was also embedded in the “pillarised” structure of society.

### → Support and recognition

As a result of the policy of the 1960s, youth centres could only be created if there were private sponsors, and if some private source could finance the centre for a period of about three years. After that, the government could give a grant, but a centre could only stay afloat if private sources could continue to bridge the considerable gap between the subsidy and real expenditure. It is clear that only those youth centres that could somehow rely on financial support from religious or political groups could establish and maintain a youth centre. Other youth were obliged to organise “commercial” leisure activities (such as bar and dance evenings), because these activities were for them important income-generating sources. Government support was only related to the workload; high-quality youth work was neither supported, nor promoted. The subsidy was merely aimed at “maintaining an organisation” and not at stimulating pedagogical and social objectives (Faché 1997).

In the 1970s, a new concept of subsidy for youth centres was developed, which was meant to stimulate and support the diversification and qualitative deepening of youth centre functions. Two elements of the regulations concerning subsidies contributed to the realisation of these objectives, namely subsidisation of professionals and subsidisation dependent on the fulfilment of functions. A professional who supports a voluntary team of young collaborators was seen as essential for the promotion of a youth centre that wished to be more than a space where youngsters “could be young together” (Faché 1974). In order to allow youth centres to recruit professional workers, subsidies had to cover their salaries to a very great extent. Furthermore, the level of the operating subsidy of a youth centre would depend on the number of its functions and the extent to which these functions are realised.

Innovative and pedagogically oriented youth centres would thus have more opportunities (Faché 1997). In the new system, the subsidy covering salaries was raised to 75% of the total salary cost of one full-time or two part-time staff members. This financial support was defined according to the wage scale of a social worker. Youth centres operating with a considerable number of young people in problematic situations (for example, working with young people from working-class urban areas or with young immigrants) might be granted subsidies for two professionals. The subsidy would then amount to 95% of the first and 50% of the second salary. The second part of the subsidy was calculated on the basis of a qualitative evaluation of the realisation of functions and the participation of youngsters in these functions. A third fixed subsidy amount was granted for the rent and maintenance of the building.

One of the major effects of the new subsidy regulations was the accelerated professionalisation of youth centre work. However, the relative proportion of salary subsidies

was much higher than expected compared to the limited budget. An increasing number of youth centres hired a professional youth worker. Their number rose between 1971 and 1974 from 34 to 104, respectively 17% and 54% of the total number of subsidised youth centres (see Figure 1). As a consequence, the bulk of the available budget for subsidies was gradually spent on the salaries of professionals. This left little money to support activities, and even less to stimulate new activities.

The professionalisation of youth (centre) work during the 1970s can be seen as an evolution, which no longer relates “expertise” to a pillar but to a group of youth work experts. “In retrospect we can say that this trend towards professionalisation undermined the ideological, pillar-bound embedding of youth centre work” (Abbeloos 2007, p. 67). This evolution fitted in with the broader climate of “depillarisation” of society, which had already started during the 1960s.

### → National and international co-operation

Since 1963, the youth centre workers in Flanders have gathered each year in order to discuss principally the pedagogical aspects of youth centre work. These week-long meetings are a source of inspiration for youth centre workers in pedagogical approaches. These study days led, in 1965, to the establishment of the Flemish Youth Centre Federation as an umbrella organisation for all youth centres in Flanders. Moreover, each of the three pillars had its own youth centre federation. At international level, youth centre workers gathered for the first time in Hamburg in 1963. From then on, every country in turn organised an international meeting. During the 1973 meeting in Hamburg, it was decided that every country would send an update of their bibliography on open youth work to Ghent University, which would act as a clearing house for open youth work. In 1976 these informal activities were institutionalised at international level through the establishment of a European Confederation of Youth Club Organisations, which organised conferences and exchanges of youth centre workers. Its secretariat is located in Antwerp.

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*Maurice Devlin*

# **Youth work, professionalism and professionalisation in Europe**

## **→ Introduction**

**T**his paper sets out to explore aspects of professionalism and professionalisation in youth work in Europe, with particular reference to Ireland and the UK, the two countries with which the author is best acquainted, but also drawing on selected examples from other parts of the continent.

First it is necessary to clarify the difference between the two key terms, as they are most commonly used. "Professionalism" is, relatively speaking, a "static" concept (in other words it does not in itself encompass the notion of evolution or change): it refers to a way of thinking and acting in relation to the work to be done within any given occupational area, an approach to the role and tasks of the worker, and it usually implies a concern with such matters as standards, accountability and reliability. "Professionalisation" has a "dynamic" quality: it refers to a process of change over time, to the way in which significant aspects of an occupation develop and evolve, and it usually implies a concern with status, recognition and relationships with (and comparisons with) other occupations. The different meanings and connotations of the terms as they have come to be used within the youth work field will be revisited later.

It is worth looking a little more closely at other key words (and concepts) on which they are both based: the noun “profession” and the verb “to profess”. To profess means to “avow, acknowledge or confess” (definitions are taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*), and one important historical meaning of the noun “profession” is therefore “a solemn declaration, promise or vow”, such as that made by a person entering a religious order. This is very significant when we remember that the issue of ethics – relating to guiding beliefs and principles – remains central in debates about contemporary professions. It is no accident that “vocation”, another word closely associated with “profession” (sometimes used synonymously with it and sometimes specifically distinguished from it, particularly in adjectival usage, for example in reference to “the difference between vocational and professional training”), also has religious origins and connotations. A vocation is literally a “calling” and therefore also rests on a sense of fundamental commitment and “devotion” – literally “taking a vow” – to a way of living and working.

So what is a “profession” in contemporary usage? One important dictionary definition is “a vocation in which a professed knowledge of some department of learning or science is used in *its application to the affairs of others* or in the practice of an art founded upon it” (emphasis added). The definition goes on to note that historically the term has applied especially to “the three learned professions of divinity, law and medicine; also to the military profession”. In 1605, the English philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon (1561-1626) obviously had this sense in mind when he wrote that “amongst so many great foundations of colleges in Europe, I find strange that they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to Arts and Sciences at large” (Bacon 1605 (2010), paragraph 8). A century later the essayist Joseph Addison similarly referred to “the three great Professions of Divinity, Law, and Physick” (Addison 1711, p. 1).

The idea that the professions are concerned with applying knowledge to “the affairs of others” is itself one with a significant history. A lecture by F. D. Maurice on “education for the middle classes” in 1839 noted that a profession is “expressly that kind of business which deals primarily with men as men [*sic*], and is thus distinguished from a Trade, which provides for the external wants or occasions of men” (Maurice 1839, p. 186). Divinity, law and medicine do indeed deal with “men as men”, or “people as people”, and so of course do the group of occupations that today are sometimes referred to as the “social professions”, including education, social work and youth work. But this does not mean that there are not very considerable differences between the “old” and the “new” professions, and such differences will be revisited later in this paper.

So far, it appears that at a minimum the concept of profession involves an element of formalised learning, a concern with certain values or beliefs and a focus on some aspect of human welfare. These issues are explored further in the next section which introduces a few of the major social scientific perspectives on the study of the professions. In a later section, such perspectives are applied to selected aspects of the historical and contemporary development of youth work in Europe.

### → Approaches to the study of the professions

The dictionary definitions quoted above focus (as dictionary definitions do) on classifying the professions, making clear what is distinctive about them, what sets them apart from other occupations (such as, in one of the references above, “the Trades”). This is in keeping with one of the dominant approaches to the study of professions, which can be termed “trait theory” because it highlights the traits

or characteristics that we should look out for so as to recognise a profession when we see one.

Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, it is difficult to find agreement on what the distinguishing traits might be. Many years ago a survey of 21 writers on professions (Millerson 1964) pointed out that they listed 23 different elements between them. No single item appeared on all the lists, and nine only appeared on one. However, the most commonly mentioned, as summarised by Jones, Brown and Bradshaw (1978, p. 61), were:

- skill based on theoretical knowledge;
- the provision of formal training;
- tests of the competence of members;
- organisation (of the “professionals”);
- adherence to a professional code of conduct;
- altruistic service.

Another example of this general approach to professions is provided by Wilensky (1964) who not only identified the traits or characteristics associated with professions but – on the basis of an empirical study of the historical development of 18 different occupations in the United States – suggested that there is a “typical sequence of events” in the course of professionalisation, or “a typical process by which the established professions have arrived” (Wilensky 1964, p. 142). The process involves the following steps or stages:

1. the occupation becomes a full-time activity;
2. the establishment of training schools and the location of these (at the outset or subsequently) within universities;
3. the formation of a professional association, which may involve:
  - a redefinition of the core tasks;
  - conflict between the “home guard” (experienced but perhaps formally less qualified practitioners) and the “newcomers”;
  - boundary disputes with “neighbouring” (cognate) occupations;
4. political activity aimed at gaining legal recognition and protection;
5. the adoption of a code of ethics.

The identification of the traits of professions and the stages that occupations go through as they “professionalise” can enable us to engage in an interesting exercise of comparing and contrasting different types of work, and indeed the question of the applicability of the above lists to contemporary youth work will be one of the concerns of the next section. Most social scientists, however, would now take the view that such an approach is of limited use, or at least that taken on its own it fails to answer (or even ask) certain important questions. Julia Evetts has expressed this view strongly:

*It is generally the case ... that definitional precision is now regarded more as a time-wasting diversion in that it did nothing to assist understanding of the power of particular occupational groups (such as law and medicine, historically) or of the contemporary appeal of the discourse of professionalism in all occupations. (Evetts 2006a, p. 134)*

We will return to the “discourse(s) of professionalism” below. First, it is worth giving mention to another approach to the study of professions that became influential in the 1970s and remains so today. This approach emphasises the way in which occupational groups actively seek to professionalise – and to be recognised as professions – because of the power, privilege and status that such recognition confers

on their members. One example of this approach is Macdonald's (1995) textbook on professions. Influenced by the sociology of Max Weber (1864-1920) as well as more recent work such as that of Larson (1977), Macdonald uses the concept of the professional project as an "ideal type" (as Weber would have called it) of the strategy pursued by occupational groups seeking to professionalise. They pursue this strategy both through the economic order (seeking recognition from the state for their legal monopoly of knowledge-based services, and in return being prepared to tolerate some statutory regulation) and the social order (seeking a cultural position of high status and respectability, which is sustained on the basis that the responsible exercise of their particularly valuable skill and expertise entitles them to the trust and regard of the public).

As presented so far this approach to professions sounds rather negative, even cynical, and calls to mind the comment of Sir Patrick in George Bernard Shaw's play *The doctor's dilemma* (1906) that "all professions are conspiracies against the laity". Macdonald did acknowledge that professions are in fact for the most part "providing the services that they claim to provide in relation to the life, health, property and other matters of crucial importance to their clientele" – "the affairs of others" as one of the dictionary definitions put it – and he observed that they "cannot keep afloat on ideology alone". They "must be able to persuade the public and the legislators that there is a reasonable quantum of altruism and public spirit in their motivation, and these audiences are not totally gullible" (Macdonald 1995, pp. 34-35). However he concluded that the overall strategy of a professional group is best understood in terms of social closure. He argued:

*[T]his Weberian concept offers a basis for understanding the progress (or otherwise) of the professional project, the conflicts and interaction that develop between and within occupations, and a means of grasping the nature of their discriminatory actions, and the way they contribute to the structured disadvantages of gender, race, ethnicity and so on. (Macdonald 1995, p. 35)*

This is in striking contrast to the more positive view of the professions that can be found in "functionalist" sociology. Emile Durkheim (1853-1917), who like Max Weber was a key figure in the discipline's early history, was a seminal influence on what came to be known as functionalism. He believed that in an advanced, urban-industrial society with a complex division of labour, occupational associations have a key positive function to play in bolstering social stability and solidarity; they are "moral communities" whose relationships and actions are guided by professional ethics (Durkheim 1957; Wolf 1970). Later writers influenced by Durkheim, such as T. H. Marshall, emphasised the altruism and service ideal of the professions and saw them as, among other things, bulwarks against threats to democracy, a view that perhaps reflected the times in which he lived and wrote (Marshall 1950; see also Evetts 2006b, p. 517)

So apart from the trait approach to professions which is primarily concerned with the empirical task of identifying and classifying their defining features, up until recently there have been two other major perspectives, one taking a relatively benign or positive view and the other adopting a more sceptical and sometimes openly negative one. These two evaluative approaches have broadly corresponded to what are sometimes called the "consensus" and "conflict" schools of thought, which dominated sociological theorising and debate for much of the 20th century .

More recently there has been a tendency for the study of the professions, in common with social scientific scholarship more generally, to attempt to go beyond

the “polarities” of the consensus-conflict divide and arrive at a “more balanced assessment”. It has been argued that public interest and professional self-interest are not necessarily mutually exclusive, that professionalism can work to promote moral values that are beneficial for society as a whole:

*Professions might need to close markets in order to be able to endorse and guarantee the education, training, experience and tacit knowledge of licensed practitioners, but once achieved professions might then be able to concentrate more fully on developing the service-orientated and performance-related aspects of their work ... [I]t is necessary to remember the dual character of professions, which includes both the provision of a service (and the development of an autonomous form of governance) as well as the use of knowledge and power for economic gain and monopoly control (which poses a threat to civility). (Evetts 2006a, pp. 136-37).*

Another feature of some recent approaches is the emphasis on the fact that professionalism as a normative value is neither a “good” nor “bad” thing in itself but rather a discourse (a set of ideas, images and practices) that can be employed for diverse purposes and to serve the interests of different groups, including being used as an instrument of discipline, power and control. Julia Evetts in fact suggests that there are two contrasting discourses of “professionalism” at play in contemporary society, particularly within “knowledge-based, service sector work” (which would include youth work). She labels these the “organisational” and the “occupational”. Of organisational professionalism she says:

*[I]t is in fact being constructed and used by the managers, supervisors and employers of workers, and it is being used in order to bring about occupational change and rationalisation as well as to (self-)discipline workers in the conduct of their work ... [It involves] hierarchical structures of authority, the standardisation of work practices, accountability, target-setting and performance review and is based on occupational training and certification. (Evetts 2006a, pp. 140-41)*

In contrast, occupational professionalism is:

*... the more traditional, historical form ... that involves discretionary decision-making in complex cases, collegial authority, the occupational control of the work and is based on trust in the practitioner by both clients and employers ... [It] is based on shared education and training, a strong socialisation process ... codes of ethics that are monitored and operationalised by professional institutes and associations. (Evetts 2006a, p. 141)*

Clearly there are likely to be considerable tensions between these two contrasting forms of professionalism, not least because they raise fundamental questions about the extent of autonomy that should be vested in professional practitioners, the degree to which they should be free to exercise discretion and make independent judgments about complex issues.

The next section will attempt to assess the relevance of the approaches outlined above to youth work in Europe.

### → Youth work – what kind of profession?

Youth work can be regarded as one of the “social professions”, a term introduced earlier in this paper. As Sarah Banks has noted, it is as yet not much used in English although it is becoming more common, having been introduced “as part of the European project to develop transferability of qualifications and greater

understandings between those involved in work in the social welfare field, where there is often no exact equivalence in the way the work of different occupational groups is divided up" (Banks 2004, p. 26). In her own study of the social professions, Banks focuses in particular on social work, community work and youth work in the UK, although she rightly says that many of the features of changing policy and practice there are also happening elsewhere in Europe as well as in North America and Australasia. Having reviewed the history of the social professions, she highlights a number of prevalent themes (Banks 2004, pp. 35-37):

1. The "calling to care". The social professions for the most part have their origins in philanthropic and charitable work of the 19th century, often carried out within religious organisations and with volunteers having a leading role.
2. The co-option to welfare and control. As well as having a concern to care for individuals and groups in society and meet their needs, many organisations that have been prominent within the social professions have also had an agenda of social control and discipline.
3. The commitment to change. As the social professions developed, the commitment to bringing about change in social structures and policies – rather than simply in the lives of "needy" individuals – becomes stronger, leading to a concern in recent decades with "anti-oppressive practice" and to combating discrimination and promoting equality.
4. An ambivalence towards professionalisation. Because they have worked with and on behalf of some of society's most disadvantaged members, the social professions have had an "uneasy relationship" with the notion of professionalisation and many practitioners have certainly wanted to avoid the elitist trappings of the "established" professions.
5. The effects of "deprofessionalising" trends. Recent trends towards managerialism, greater prescriptiveness and tighter regulation of many occupational groups have challenged the scope of professional discretion and autonomy.

Taken together and applied specifically to youth work, the above list of themes and features help to make it clear why professionalisation in the conventional or "established" sense was always unlikely. There have from the outset been significant tensions within youth work about its key function or purpose and this may have hindered the development of a shared strategy – or shared "professional project", to use one of the terms introduced earlier – among those practising it. The anti-oppressive and "emancipatory" strand has competed with the "disciplinary" one, as in other social professions (Hallstedt and Högström 2005), and may on occasion have set it at odds with the state (and the state's role in recognising professions is key). The fact that volunteers played such a vital role in the direct provision of youth work services for so long, and that at least in some countries they still do, could not but have an impact on the degree to which – and the way in which – it would professionalise. There may for instance have been (and still be) reluctance on the part of the state and/or the public to recognise an activity as "professional" when the same activity, or something very like it, has been carried out on a voluntary basis. The volunteers themselves may have been unhappy with professionalisation on the basis that it would seem to reflect poorly on, or in some way diminish, their own contribution to youth work (suggesting that they are less than, or other than, "professional" in what they do).

Related to the point about volunteering, there has long been an ambivalence in youth work, as in other social professions including particularly community work, about whether it is a profession or a social movement. This is an important distinction because in those occupations that have come to be recognised as professions

there has tended to be a distinction between those with particular expertise or acumen and those (“lay persons”) availing of the experts’ services, whereas in social movements the emphasis has tended to be on collective endeavour and solidarity, although that is not to say that being a “professional” is incompatible with participating in a social movement (Devlin 1994; Smith 1980, Couseé et al. 2010a). Finally, unlike medicine, law and the like, the “deprofessionalising” trends that Banks refers to were brought to bear on youth workers (and those in cognate areas) before they had even had the chance to develop a strong sense of their own discretion and autonomy as professionals.

Having said all this, what can we say about the extent to which youth work in Europe has professionalised, and is now a “profession”? Certainly, in at least some countries the point has been reached where many, perhaps most, of the characteristics of professions as conventionally described by trait theorists have now been acquired by youth work. If we define youth work broadly as a form of “out-of-school education” which focuses on non-formal or informal learning and which has a “double concern” with personal and social development (Lauritzen 2005), then we can say that in quite a number of European countries there is now a full-time occupation with this as its key purpose, although the term “youth work” is only used in a few cases – notably the UK and Ireland – with terms used elsewhere including “social pedagogue”, “social educator”, “sociocultural animator” and “welfare worker”. Sometimes these latter terms are used to describe a type of work that can be carried out with people of all ages, but often there is a particular emphasis on work with children and young people.

In some cases “youth work” has come to be used, at least by those with an interest in making cross-national and cross-cultural comparisons, as a collective term to describe a range of types of “work with young people” (whereas elsewhere, especially in the Anglophone countries, “youth work” refers to a particular type of work with young people). Thus, for example, Loncle (2009, p. 132) says that “under the umbrella of French youth work, at least four professions can be gathered”, namely sociocultural animators, special needs workers, operations managers of youth job centres (*chargés de missions*) and health organisers (*animateurs de prévention* or *animateurs de santé*). Despite such differences, it is increasingly the case that something recognisable as “youth work” is being practised as a full-time job in countries across Europe. However, the differences cannot be dismissed, and cannot but have an impact on the extent to which youth work is regarded as a discrete profession.

It is also the case that training and education for youth work has become or is becoming established within universities and/or in other institutions of further and higher education. The precise location of the training programmes (further/vocational or higher education; and if higher, university or non-university institutions) is a clue to the stage youth work (whatever the designation) has reached in the professionalisation process, and often the stage reached is itself ambiguous. Helve (2009, p. 124) notes that in Finland programmes leading to youth work positions are available “at both upper secondary vocational level and within higher education” and that “people working in the same position may have different qualification titles”. In Malta there is a degree-level university programme in youth and community studies, modelled on the British system, and two further traditional “traits” of professionalisation have fallen into place: the establishment of a professional association and the existence of a code of ethics. The Maltese Association of Youth Workers was founded in 1998 and its Code of Ethics launched in 2001. It was subsequently granted professional recognition by the Maltese Federation of



Professional Associations, meaning that “youth workers are now represented in government consultations with other professionals in the development of relevant policy areas” (Teuma 2009, p. 91). However, in a particularly striking example of the ambiguity just referred to, there is still not much paid youth work in Malta and “no full-time professionalised service to go into”, with graduates generally involving themselves in voluntary work.

If we consider the extent to which youth work displays evidence of having embarked on a “professional project” as conceived by Macdonald (and others), whereby the members of professionalising occupations are seen to be principally concerned with pursuing and defending their own strategic interests – their own status, prestige and perquisites – then all we can say is that if there has been such a project it has not been a very successful one: youth workers can hardly be said to occupy a privileged position in comparison to other educational, human service or welfare workers anywhere in Europe. They have certainly on occasion taken steps to protect their interests as employees and there are examples of trade unions specifically for youth workers, but this dimension of youth work is at least matched and probably outweighed by its reputation for a values-based commitment to the interests and well-being of young people, or – to use a term introduced earlier and associated with both trait theory and functionalist approaches – for altruistic service. Youth work might indeed be said to have a civilising influence, as functionalism says a profession should, although the term “civilising” might be interpreted differently by contemporary youth workers. Youth work as such is a vital part of “civil society”, and it is important to give sufficient emphasis (or in some cases perhaps to rediscover) the social dimension of the work (Cousée et al. 2010b). Here too, however, we must recognise that the key terms are contestable. “Civil society” has different meanings and manifestations in different countries, and concepts such as social education, social pedagogy and social welfare vary in signification not just from one country or culture to another but according to the interests and perspectives of different actors and interest groups.

In this regard it is useful to recall the observations of Walter Lorenz (2009) in his contribution to the first Blankenberge history workshop. Lorenz argued persuasively that ambivalence is inherent in youth work (and broader “social work”) practice and has been throughout its history. Significant tensions exist, based on such questions as: is youth work about autonomy and authenticity or assimilation and adjustment; about the reproduction of identities or their transformation; an organised element of public social policy or the spontaneous product of social movements? Rather than attempt to identify clear-cut answers to such (perhaps unanswerable) questions, he suggests that the negotiation of ambivalence should itself be seen as a core skill and competence of youth workers.

The ambivalence Lorenz describes extends to the concepts of professionalism and professionalisation themselves. This applies even in situations where, from an external point of view, it might seem that youth work has travelled very far along the road of professionalisation. In the UK and Ireland, it is well established as a full-time job, even as a “career”. Apart from programmes of professional education and training in universities that are academically validated at honours degree and postgraduate levels, there is a framework for such programmes to be professionally approved or endorsed by a body that includes representation of all the key interests in the youth work sector, including policy makers, statutory and non-statutory employers, advisory bodies, practitioners and the training institutions themselves. Separate such bodies (generally called education and training standards (ETS) committees) exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The Irish committee operates on an

all-Ireland basis, dealing with both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and there is mutual recognition of awards across all the jurisdictions, meaning that graduates of a programme endorsed by one ETS are recognised as professionally qualified by all the others, giving workers professional mobility throughout the two islands (an important cross-border initiative in the EU context). In some but not all cases the possession of an endorsed qualification is linked with salary entitlements and other aspects of working conditions. This framework for the endorsement of professional education and training programmes is roughly analogous to that which applies in the more established professions in the same countries.

Yet youth work is not regulated by the state in any part of the UK or Ireland, in the sense in which sociologists of the professions commonly use that term. In formal legal terms there is no requirement that persons practising youth work (or applying for posts) possess given qualifications or awards. “Youth worker” does not have the status of “protected title” (but it is not alone in that regard among the professions: neither does “teacher”). The system is largely based on understandings – albeit explicit and codified ones – between the central actors. It is a system that has worked relatively well, but it is not in itself a very secure one and certainly not one that on its own, without a range of other safeguards, could be regarded as sufficient to defend the “professional” status of youth work, however defined. In England in particular, which in certain respects led the way in the professionalisation process for decades, youth work, and workers, are currently under siege and the “youth service” is battling for its very survival (Davies 2009). Even if one does not believe that an undiluted version of the traditional, somewhat elitist, model of professionalisation should apply in the youth work case (and the current author certainly does not; see Devlin 2010) much of great value is being lost as a result of current “deprofessionalisation” tendencies in some countries.

To refer back to a further concept introduced in the previous section, there is evidence that Evetts’ notion of competing discourses of professionalism – the “occupational” and the “organisational” – has relevance in the youth work context. It was stated at the start of this article that professionalism usually refers to a concern with such matters as standards, accountability and reliability. But it is how these concepts are defined and determined, measured and monitored that really matters in practice and there is not always agreement between policy makers and practitioners about their interpretation or their implementation. In this respect it is important to note that the recent introduction of the National Quality Standards Framework for youth work in Ireland has taken place on the basis of a substantial consensus across the sector. This is not to say that there have not been tensions or that there are not still apprehensions; but the time devoted to the piloting and preparation of the framework, and the extensive process of consultation and dialogue engaged in along the way, have been important factors in securing “buy-in” within the field.

Allowing such time, and engaging in such dialogue, are of course intrinsic to the professional identity of youth work itself. It is vitally important that, however and wherever youth work develops as a profession in the future, it does so in a way that is in keeping with its own core ethos and principles rather than being driven by extraneous considerations. If we are looking for a statement of what that ethos and those principles might amount to in the European context, as well as considering recent official and unofficial documents we might look back to a meeting of experts from the member states of the then European Economic Community held in Maynooth, Ireland, in 1990. Supported by the European Commission, the meeting was convened to share information about, and insights into, the professional training and education of youth workers. Not surprisingly a lot of attention was devoted to

the differences in youth work policy, provision and practice between the member states. Nonetheless, the meeting was able to conclude that despite “infrastructural and institutional differences ... strong agreement existed with regard to ... certain key features of youth work itself”. These were as follows (Devlin 1991):

1. Youth work is essentially concerned with the “informal” education and development of the young person. Regardless of where it takes place, it is distinguished from formal education by the style of the worker’s intervention and by the nature of the relationship between the worker and the young person.
2. Youth work is “global” in its approach: it is concerned with the “all-round” development of the young person, rather than being limited to the inculcation of a narrow set of skills or bodies of knowledge (although of course specific youth work activities may indeed involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills).
3. Youth work rests on the freedom of choice and the voluntary participation of young people in its educational and recreational activities and programmes.
4. Youth work is concerned not just with the individual but also with the development of society. In addition to meeting individual need, through group learning and activity it promotes social and political education and awareness, enabling young people to participate actively in their communities and in society at large.
5. Given the importance of the role played by youth work both for individual young people and for society, it is vital that those who practise it – whether on a paid or voluntary basis – have the opportunity to develop and perfect, through adequate and appropriate training, the requisite knowledge, skills and personal aptitudes.

## → Conclusion

The above statement attempting to capture a shared “European” view of youth work is now 20 years old (and the EEC then comprised less of the continent than the EU now does). While the Council of Europe was already very active by then in supporting youth work and publishing youth work materials, there was no explicit attention to youth work at all within the European Economic Community apart from the fact that reference in the treaty to “socio-educational instructors” was used to facilitate and support exchanges for young people and youth workers. This has changed enormously. After a number of significant developments in the 2000s, in April 2009 the European Commission published its communication “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering”; and within months this was followed by the Council of the European Union resolution on a renewed framework for co-operation in the youth field.

What are the implications of these for youth work as a profession? The answer, not surprisingly in the light of all that has been said above, is unclear. The Commission’s communication defines youth work (*jugendarbeit*, *animation socio-éducative*, *animación juvenil* and so on) as “out-of-school education”, says that it has a significant contribution to make to society “together with ... other professionals”, and that it “needs to be professionalised further” (European Commission 2009, p. 11).

Of course the words used to express these sentiments in the different EU languages have different connotations, drawing on different understandings and traditions both of youth work and of professions, but it is in any case a strong affirmation of a distinctive professional identity for youth work. It is equally clear that the latter statement from the Council of the European Union seems to row back significantly from the Commission’s aspiration to further professionalisation. In fact the latter

word (or variants of it) does not appear at all, and references to youth work are couched in more general terms of supporting development and innovation (Council of the European Union 2009, p. 10). It is hardly surprising that agreement could not be reached by political representatives from all 27 member states of the EU on a decisive statement in this area. The Council of the European Union resolution reminds us, however, that there remains an ambivalence at a political level (if not in some cases an active resistance) towards the idea of youth work as a profession, and towards the professionalisation of youth work.

This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Perhaps, as Walter Lorenz (2009) suggests in the context of a different discussion, youth workers will have to get used to managing and negotiating such ambivalence rather than constantly expending energy in attempting to combat it. My own view is that youth work and youth workers should worry less about the perceptions of others; and should care less about grappling with the questions “is youth work a profession?” and has “youth work professionalised”. If we return to the definitional components introduced at the start of this paper – the importance of underpinning values, the sense of calling, the concern with human welfare, the need for systematic learning – then youth work is unquestionably a profession in the most important, and socially useful, senses. The question at this stage is: what kind of profession do we want it to be?

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# History of youth information in Europe

*Mark Boes*

## → Introduction

Youth information is a form of youth work that has existed in some countries for over 40 years; at European level it is also well known and well organised, having existed for almost 25 years. Partly because of this early European co-operation large parts of its history have been written and described. It does not suffer from the identity crisis that has had an impact on other forms of youth work. The principles and underlying values are specified in adopted texts, such as the European Youth Information Charter and the Principles for Online Youth Information. These documents do not just state the obvious but are the result of years of intense discussion among professionals. A process that has allowed youth information to define what it is exactly.

In order to answer questions like “Why do we need youth information?”, “Where did it come from?” and “In what direction will we go in the future?” a look at its history can be very clarifying. Looking back shows clearly that the development of youth information from the very beginning was largely influenced by the changing needs of young people. Youth information has grown with the generations and their different operating modes and interests.



## → What is youth information?

Information (Latin: *informare* = to give form to the mind) is decoded data that is capable of interpretation by the receiver. A book in a language that you do not speak can have a lot of interesting data in it but as long as you cannot understand the meaning of the words it is not information. The definition of youth can create some discussion. Being widely recognised as the period between childhood and being an adult, the age limits are interpreted in different ways. One could argue that youth starts at the beginning of puberty, which means at 12 or 13. Different youth organisations have stretched the maximum age for youth – for not always very clear reasons – and nowadays the European Union defines youth up to the age of 30. Outside Europe (for example, in the United States) the tendency is to define a much shorter youth period and people above the age of 21 or even 18 are seen as adults. The most commonly used age definition within youth work in Europe is between 15 and 25.

The above should not lead one to conclude that youth information is any decoded data for people between the ages of 15 and 25. This is not the case.

It is not only information made understandable for a certain target group – in this case young people – but something more. Essentially, it is a user-centred approach. The primary concern is to respond to the questions and needs raised by the users, irrespective of any other external interest. Youth information services provide information on a wide range of subjects, in a large variety of forms. The information provided is practical, pluralistic, unbiased, accurate and regularly updated. Youth information aims at supporting young people to become independent persons and citizens. Therefore, it does not tell them what to do but provides them with what they need to make their own knowledge-based decisions. This includes, of course, pure data but goes far beyond that. Youth information works with a wide range of interventions such as informing, signposting, guiding and counselling to name only some of them. The main goal always remains the same, namely to provide its target group with the necessary skills to find, assess and use information for a self-determined life.

## → The generations

The development of youth information did not happen all by itself, but was influenced by a changing society and the diverse information needs of different generations. The way young people look for information, how they use it and what they need it for has changed considerably over the years. The generations of young people over the last 65 years are described nowadays using well-known terms such as baby boomers and Generation X. In fact, it is not that clear what those generations are, especially when it comes to the question of which period you have to be born in exactly in order to be counted in one or the other. To make things even more complicated, it is possible that people born in one period behave in a way that is described as typical for a person born in another generation. So when it comes to time, the borders between generations are fluid. But in the context of the development of youth information our interest is much more in what a generation has in common, how they react and what their needs are.

## → Prehistory

For many years, a commonly held belief in the world of youth information was that youth information started in France. Students and workers rebelled against the centrally led society in 1968. Some of them wanted to start a long march through the

institutions. One of the tools they identified as crucial for their mission was unbiased, up-to-date information that was targeted at a young audience as regards language, design and the topics covered. This insight and the impact the movement had on French society, among many other achievements, led in 1969 to the foundation of the CIDJ (Centre Information et Documentation Jeunesse), the first youth information centre in Paris. It goes without saying that the influence of France on youth information in Europe has been major. The French system has served as an inspiration for many and the CIDJ is still an important partner within the Youth Information Network in Europe. But they were not the first. In 1967 there was already a youth information centre in Munich (Germany) called the IFO – Informationszentrum (it is still there, only nowadays it is called the JIZ). In 1966 the city of Ghent (Belgium) had a youth information centre called Info jeugd (Faché 1990). And if you read carefully through a document called “Keinut, Filmit, kerhot ja tatsat”, you will find that the Turku (Finland) Youth Office’s counselling centre, back in 1955, sent out letters inviting all young migrants who moved to the city to pay them a visit in order to help them find their way around their new environment.

At this point, the “why” questions start to take the stage and the “where and when” questions start to fade. Turku was faced with large numbers of young migrants moving to the city. At first sight, the information needs of those young people were based on mobility. And in fact mobility information has always been one of the pillars of youth information. But appearances are deceptive. If the purpose of this information service were to enable and stimulate young people to be mobile it would probably not have been based in Turku but in their home towns. This information service was there to assist young people who were arriving in a much more complex society than the one they came from. Youth information emerged because our society became more complex, often so complex that without any help it got difficult for a person to orientate themselves and function within it.

In the end, the centre in Turku did not cover a broad spectrum of subjects, but specialised very clearly in one service, so it should not be called “generalist youth information”. The centre in Ghent – founded by youth information pioneer Willy Faché – was a general one and thus can be seen as the first youth information centre. The underlying working principles of this centre were:

- any young person may walk in with any problem;
- immediate help is available when the client asks for it;
- client-centred approach; self-determination;
- confidential;
- free of charge;
- independent.

The centre in Ghent also took the initiative to organise the 1st European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres, which took place in 1972. The participants of this travelling (by bus) conference visited centres in Munich, Erlangen, Essen, Amsterdam, Amersfoort, Utrecht, Ghent and Brussels. This conference was the start of European co-operation in the field of youth information. It was a co-operation that would turn out to be crucial for development.

## → 1975

The young generation in the 1970s was called the baby boomers. They were born between 1945 and 1960. They grew up in a period with growing prosperity and fought (or witnessed) to get rid of a top-down society. An awareness that the

influence of the ongoing changes in society was partly in their hands came with a strong feeling of responsibility for the outcome of that process, and their own role in it. Information was seen as a key condition to ensure democratic rights. In some European countries this led to strong growth in youth information services. Some other countries still had to wait for the political climate to change and some started out with more general “open to all ages services”, only to find out later that specialised services for young people were justified and needed.

Youth information in the 1970s was a place where you could go and where someone would answer your questions or where you could pick up a leaflet or any other kind of written information. Due to a lack of the information technology that we are so used to today, youth information centres almost had a monopoly on information on many topics. So the focus in those days was on personal and written information. As such, the first structured approaches to making more relevant and unbiased information available to more people was thus already a small revolution in itself.

Youth information centres were seen as an alternative service for young people, which not only provided them with information and counselling but also criticised the functioning of long-established services.

In the 1970s we also find the first initiatives designed to exchange knowledge on youth information. The ICAIYICS (International Centre for Advancement of Innovative Youth Information and Counselling Services) was set up in 1972 by professionals working in youth counselling services in Flanders, Austria, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. The ICAIYICS was in the 1980s one of the founding members of ERYICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency).

## → 1985

The 1980s were the times of Generation X or the lost generation. Born between 1960 and 1975 they had to face an implosion of the economy with little hope of finding a job and making a living. This led to a situation whereby young people were occupied with existentialist questions and influenced by the so-called “me society”. The most visible aspect of this generation was the subculture called punk (No future). Basically, the main question changed from “how can I influence society?” to “what can I do in this society?”

Youth information was still based on face-to-face contacts or interventions. The rapid introduction of a new tool called the computer would have a major impact on work. Information leaflets and guides could be edited and updated much more efficiently. The first experiments using databases and telecommunication networks were established. It was clear at that time that the management of information needed attention and technical support. The profession of youth information workers gained an additional dimension.

Youth information by then was clearly based on the needs of young people. This had not only a direct influence on the variety of topics youth information centres covered but in many places this led also to the fact that concrete additional services were provided, like housing mediation, job guidance and the selling of concert tickets.

In 1985 there was the first meeting of the so-called International Liaison Committee in order to organise a European seminar for youth information and counselling structures. Another aim of this meeting of early pioneers within youth information was to try

to establish a European network, which they achieved on 17 April 1986, when the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) was founded. It had its first general assembly in 1988. It defined its working priorities as: youth mobility, training and research, and computerisation of information. There was interest in developing an ERYICA net, based on the then existing telecommunication systems, and a charter that would describe the underlying principles of youth information work. This led to very intense discussions between those who were convinced that counselling was an integral part of youth information and those who thought it should be excluded; which kept professionals in Europe busy for many years.

The existence of a European network turned out to be a boost for youth information. Ideas and projects were exchanged and pretty soon the members found out that even if structures and the environment in their countries were rather different, nevertheless the ideals and values their work was based on were similar if not the same. This common idea of what youth information is and the arguments for its importance developed in an ongoing debate among professionals at an international level. The exchange of best practices turned out to be an immense help for all partners in lobbying for youth information services at national level.

Despite the fact that ERYICA did and does not have a monopoly on youth information, it proved to be the centre of development, a place to discuss values and principles and a collective memory.

Until 2007, ERYICA was based in Paris in the premises of the CIDJ (as a matter of fact, initially, ERYICA was an administrative part of the CIDJ, which shows clearly the strong commitment of the French network to the idea of European co-operation). It was led by its colourful Secretary General, John Alexander, whose biggest achievements were to build a strong European network of national members, create a partnership with the Council of Europe and to position ERYICA as a specialist organisation in youth information.

## → 1995

Born between 1970 and 1985, Generation Next was the youth of the 1990s. This generation could be characterised by its need for communication. The use of the Internet and mobile telephones enabled them to be always in contact. Fast communication tools satisfied the basic desire of, especially, young people to have an immediate response to their needs. They got used to and demanded a quick answer to every question that arose.

Youth information faced its first crisis with the advent of the Internet. Stakeholders, partners but also youth workers themselves started asking annoying questions like “do we still need those youth information centres if all information can be found on the Internet?”, and in the beginning youth information workers had no valid answer to that question.

A few quotations of the JIP Rotterdam team (Youth Information Centre, Rotterdam) are a good illustration of the process youth information was going through:

1994 “Internet? That is the hobby of my boss during working hours.”

1995 “This will never be a serious media for information. It’s only used by nerds.”

1996 “My god, this means that anybody can put information online.”

1997 “Shouldn’t we look for a student to create a site for us?”

- 1998 “We need a good national youth information site which is updated by professionals.”
- 1999 “So if we answer an e-mail from a young person, that is also a client that we should put down in the registration system?”
- 2000 “We did it! We have the best youth information site and we are proud of it.”

These quotes show that for youth information, as for society as a whole, time was needed to get used to the possibilities and also the necessities of the revolution that the new technologies meant for everybody’s life. It took some years to turn the threat that the Internet was for most youth information workers in the 1990s into one of the channels and offers we have for young people within youth work.

International co-operation flourished in the 1990s. Two other networks handling specialised forms of youth information were established: the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), which deals with benefits and reductions for young mobile Europeans whilst using their direct contact with cardholders to spread relevant information to young people, and Eurodesk, which focuses on European opportunities for youngsters, from funding possibilities to mobility within the Union.

In 1990 the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on youth information,<sup>63</sup> which gave youth information its first formal recognition at international level and invited member states to invest in this form of youth work. Up until the 1990s, the history of youth information was mainly the history of youth information in western Europe. When the Iron Curtain fell this finally changed. HAYICO (Hungary) was admitted as a member of ERYICA in 1991, the first member organisation in a former “communist” country.

The European Youth Information Charter was adopted by ERYICA in 1993, establishing a common set of principles for youth information centres all over Europe, which in its updated form is still valid today.

In 1995, ERYICA organised together with the Spanish member INJUVE a Summer University on Youth Information in Mollina, in which almost 200 youth information workers took part. This event gathered for the first time youth information workers from all levels in a European training event and has remained the largest such initiative in Europe until now. In 1997, the Finnish member organised the first seminar on the Internet within the context of youth information. The title was “how to use the Internet to inform young people” and for most of the countries present it was the first time they had seen the Internet as a potential part of their profession.

## → 2005

For Generation Z (born between 1980 and 1995) new media are not new at all. For them, the media have always been around and the use of social media is natural. Generation Z spends part of its social life online. Growing up with it, their use of the new technologies is more natural and easy-going in many ways, especially when it comes to the technical side of it. Nevertheless, they are less competent when it comes to finding information using those new tools that they are so familiar with. Often it seems that for them the truth is delivered by the first 10 hits in Google.

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63. Recommendation No. R (90) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe (21 February 1990).

This has to do with a lack of information literacy, as in being able to assess and evaluate the quality of information.

By the beginning of the new millennium, youth information was present on the Internet. Portals were very popular during that period. They were more easy to maintain than content sites because they were basically signposts to where the information could be found on other sites. For some time portals fulfilled the role, to a certain extent, of youth information by giving orientation to young people, but they had to be revised as search engines, personalised information and social networks gained a much larger role in the “information behaviour” of young people.

It was a relief for those involved in youth information when it became clear after some years of the Internet being a part of everybody’s life that young people still needed the possibility of having face-to-face contact. Picking up a leaflet in a youth information centre became less popular, actually visitor numbers in almost all centres decreased. But at the end of the day young people still needed a tailor-made answer to their specific question. We saw a shift in the tasks a youth information centre had to fulfil. The centres were not needed any more for easy, quick questions thus the number of visits went down, but on the other hand they got a new role in guiding young people on how to find the right information at the right time, and helping them in their decision-making processes. This type of contact needed more time, preparation and knowledge – so there was a shift from quantity to quality.

This last development clearly shows that a new task for youth information is to play its role when it comes to information literacy. Guiding young people in how to find information and, above all, deal with it in a critical and conscientious way within a system of information overload and a knowledge-based society has become an important, and since the 1990s ever-growing, part of youth information.

Whereas this new role has been embraced by those involved in youth information over recent years, we are still exploring what to do with social media. This is even more complicated since some of the new environments that look like being the next big thing are gone the year after (as an example of this we might take the rise and fall of “Second Life”). It is clear by now that the ambition of youth information is more than just opening a fan page on Facebook, but the concrete activities with, and offers for, young people in those environments are still a work in progress.

In the new millennium, youth participation in youth information began to follow a popular ERYICA slogan: “Stop talking, start doing”. New forms of participation were invented and implemented. Especially interesting were the new forms that were specially developed to include the so-called unorganised young people. European projects like Meet the Street (a Europe-wide consultation by ERYICA) are helping the main target group of youth information centres – namely, young people not involved regularly in youth organisations and councils, but who wish to express their opinion on topics that concern them at that particular moment in time – to have their say and thus contribute to youth policy development and take an active part in society.

When it comes to youth policies, it goes without saying that the European Union White Paper on Youth (2001),<sup>64</sup> wherein youth information was one of the four

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64. [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2001/com2001\\_0681en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2001/com2001_0681en01.pdf).

priorities, had a great impact on the field of youth information. In many countries, it helped the active grass-roots organisations to gain a more formal recognition and led to the creation of national co-ordination and quality measurements. A more modest role is there to play in the new strategy on youth, “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering”, and the new framework of European co-operation in the youth field,<sup>65</sup> where youth information is present as one of the forms of youth work and a supporting tool for certain planned priorities and activities, and the three existing European networks, ERYICA, the EYCA and Eurodesk, are named as supporting actors at European level. A very recent achievement (16 June 2010) is the adoption by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)8<sup>66</sup> on youth information. This new recommendation highlights, in particular, new developments around new technologies and participation, while reconfirming the ideas and principles of the first, still valid recommendation from the year 1990.

Statistical data at a European level that ERYICA was able to publish in 2007 shows the relevance of youth information in figures: 13 000 youth information workers in 8 000 youth information centres had 23 million face-to-face contacts in the year 2005. A new survey is currently being conducted that will update these data and enrich them with information on the use of the Internet, new media and outreach activities, thus also showing the changes within this form of youth work.

Concluding this glance at recent history, two remarkable things should be mentioned.

Between 2007 and 2009 there was a rapid development of youth information in the western Balkans, leading to an active network of partners at NGO level, as well as support for decision makers in many of the countries. The proactive and strategic approach of the ERYICA office, and the invaluable support of the already established ERYICA partner, MISSS Slovenia, played a crucial role in this.

Finally, with the launch of SHERYICA, the interactive online platform for youth information workers, in December 2009 the idea of having an ERYICA net finally came into reality after 23 years.

## → 2015

Generation Alpha is born in the 21st century. Their oldest member was 10 at the moment when this paper was written. We do not have a clue what they want and “how they tick”. They are knocking at the door, they will need new forms of youth information, other ways to be informed, new innovative methods, media that are even newer than new. We have to find out and we have to find out quick.

After 40 to 50 years of experience, one thing is very clear: the young people of today and tomorrow will need the possibility of having face-to-face contact and a tailor-made answer to their question, as well as all kinds of other channels to get their information that technology and our services can offer. After all, they are the next generation, which has to take a lot of decisions that will have a major influence on crucial parts of their lives within a rather short time frame

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65. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:311:0001:0011:EN:PDF>.

66. [www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG\\_Coop/Documents/CM\\_Rec\\_10\\_youth\\_information\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Documents/CM_Rec_10_youth_information_en.pdf).

and without the experience that adults can rely on. Therefore, they will need the services of youth information just like the generations before them, only probably transformed into new ways and forms.

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# **The early years of innovative approaches to youth information and counselling**

*Willy Faché*

## **→ Introduction**

**T**his chapter focuses on the innovative services set up for the specific purpose of giving social support to young people by means of information and counselling, in other words youth information and counselling services. These innovative services originated in the mid-1960s. In this chapter, we will first analyse the circumstances determining the coming into existence of the innovative services in the 1960s in the United States, Canada and western Europe. Following this introduction, we analyse the discussion themes that were central to this youth service in the 1970s. To conclude, we highlight the working principles, which remained to a large extent unchanged through the years, and have a look at staff characteristics and some organisational models.

In the mid-1980s, youth information and counselling was an important topic on the agenda of the 1st European Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Strasbourg, 1985), which included youth information and counselling among its priorities for future action and co-operation at the European level. As a result of one of the recommendations of this ministerial conference, the Council of Europe established, in 1986, the Committee of Experts on

Youth Information in Europe. This is also the period in which the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) was established (in 1986). Marc Boes (in this volume) has already elaborated on ERYICA and the historical period from the late 1980s up to today, in the previous chapter. This chapter is limited to the period from the origin of the youth information and counselling centres in the 1960s to the mid-1980s and it is based on our knowledge of the field in which we had been engaged from 1965 up until 1991. Our analysis draws on the documentation of the International Centre for Advancement of Innovative Youth Information and Counselling Services in Ghent, Belgium, and the findings of an international survey of "The aims, methods and organisation of youth information and counselling centres in Europe", which we carried out in 1987-88 on behalf of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts on Youth Information in Europe (Faché 1987, 1990).

### → **Determinants of the origin of innovative youth information and counselling services**

It is not easy to discover the reason for the emergence of these innovative services. Why did these services come into being, and why then? The fact that partially different factors play a role in different countries makes things even more complicated. From the analysis of the literature on the inception of these innovative services and the interviews we had with the founders of these organisations, we think we can discern four determinants that played a role in the period of inception. For some services, certain determinants (for example, social criticism) played a role in their inception, whereas other determinants played a role in the course of their development. Other innovative services drew their inspiration from existing "models" when they came into being (Lascoumes 1973). Depending on the degree to which a specific determinant plays a decisive role, an innovative service fulfils a supplementary role with respect to existing assistance services (for example, a service created because of the need for youth-specific provision) or it is a competing form of assistance (such as an initiative created because of criticism of existing forms of assistance).

### → **The need for specific provisions for young people in problem situations**

This was the determinant that inspired the Young People's Consultation Centre in London in 1961. It was probably the first walk-in centre for young people in Europe, which "offers [adolescents] the opportunity to talk to a professional person about problems that worry them" (Halpin 1967). "We chose", according to Laufer, the founder of this centre, "a name which would be neutral and all-encompassing, and avoided any words which would give the impression of a clinic, or of illness. In order to assure a service which would be able to deal with those immediate problems for which adolescents sought help, and also be able to detect signs of more serious pathology, the intervening staff of the Centre consists of professional people who have all been trained in psychoanalysis and who have had previous experience in work with adolescents. There is also a psychiatric social worker, a medical adviser, a psychologist, and a legal adviser ..." "The idea of having a 'walk-in' service, with professionally qualified staff, was based on the premise that there are many adolescents in the community who are in immediate need of help, but who would not seek help from many of the existing agencies. Adolescents are very frightened by the thought of mental illness, and agencies which are somehow linked to 'illness' or 'trouble' will not often make contact with those adolescents who may be in serious need of help. Our belief was that if we created the opportunity for adolescents simply to come in and talk with somebody, we would be able to meet many adolescents at a time when intervention of some kind could well

prevent serious social or psychological trouble later on in their lives" (Laufer 1964). The "walk-in" concept or "open door" concept of the Young People's Consultation Centre in London appears to offer faculties which meet the needs of young people. In the second half of the 1960s, the open-door concept inspired the founders of the Centre for Youth Information and Counselling, Info Jeugd, in Ghent, and the Advice Centre for Young People (Jongerenadviescentrum) in Amsterdam.

### → Criticising the established, traditional assistance for youth

The creation in 1966 of the Centre for Youth Information and Counselling, Info Jeugd, in Ghent, and in 1969 the Advice Centre for Young People (Jongerenadviescentrum) in Amsterdam was inspired by a fundamental criticism against the then established, traditional youth assistance. This criticism was formulated in a creative way by developing an alternative. The notion of "alternative" was re-calibrated by these social innovations. The noun "alternative" now entered the language as an adjective meaning "based on entirely new principles, aimed at a set of other than the prevailing methods". Their criticism concerns, among other things, the bureaucratic method (waiting lists, by appointment only), the official character of the assistance (start the counselling by asking the person's name, address, age, daily work, etc.), the psychiatric-medical model of assistance, etc. These alternative assistance services developed not as complementary but rather as a competitive form of assistance with regard to the prevailing assistance (Faché 1990).

### → Innovative answers to new social problems

New somatic and psychological problems appeared among youngsters in the 1960s in the United States, Canada and western Europe. These problems seemed to be related to the new lifestyle of a considerable part of middle-class youth.

These middle-class youth saw themselves as participants in a cultural revolution rejecting a sterile, excessively consuming, overly technological, and alienating social order (Holleb and Abrams 1975). "Prominent among the standard-bearers of this revolution were the masses of freaked-out kids who began to invade the cities in the summer of 1967. These 'hippies and freaks' gathered in that summer in Boston and San Francisco like a convention of Gypsies to smoke dope, drop acid, make love and listen to music". This youth were, according to a US research report (Glosscote et al. 1975), often unwelcome at traditional helping facilities, and clearly made to feel so:

*The movement for alternatives in mental health and counseling arose as a part of and as a response to this time of changes. The founders of these first alternative services were in a unique position to bridge the gap between the two cultures. They were dropouts who had not completely dropped out. (Holleb and Abrams 1975)*

Thus, alternative services sprang up. The free-clinic movement was born in Haight-Ashbury (San Francisco) in 1967. In the same period, walk-in counselling centres, hotlines, runaway houses, etc., were also started (Corner et al. 1972). According to the "Interim report of the Canadian Government's Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs" (1971), in Canada too innovative services started. These services were described as (ibid. p. 417):

*... a human response to the social problems directly associated with the various life styles embraced by large numbers of Canadian youth. Some characteristics of this style are: a desire to travel, a disinterest in material things in and for themselves, less than usual concern with conventional standards of health and sanitation, and sexual and drug experimentation.*

In the same period Release was established in London (1967). Release aimed at helping those young people who had been arrested for alleged drug offences (Coon and Harris 1969). This was a time when a number of drugs, especially cannabis, were gaining popularity with a particular segment of young people, giving rise to new social problems. Problems, as far as the police and courts were concerned, were about the question of how to treat this new kind of offender, but from the offender's point of view, were about securing their legal rights. In a direct response to this situation, Caroline Coon and Rufus Harris founded Release (D'Agapeyeff 1972). Release grew into a "life-support system" for at least a certain percentage of the typically young clientele coming to them. Linked with this it was the persuasion of Glosscote (1975, p. 3) "that we would find that getting into trouble with drugs is almost always a symptom of other serious kinds of problems in living – sometimes intolerable environmental circumstances, sometimes because one's 'head is not together', sometimes both". In all these countries, innovative services came into being attempting to provide, through innovative means, social, material and psychological assistance for young people with problems, who were not seen before and/or who were not dealt with properly.

### → Criticising the problem-causing societal structures

In 1969, in The Hague, the Sosjale Joenit originated from the so-called Experimentele Maatschappij, a flower-power youth group with radical-anarchist traits (Mulder-de Bruin 1978). At about the same time, the Bond voor Vrijheidsrechten in Amsterdam stimulated the establishment of a local Release (1970), more or less after the London model. The Bond was an organisation of academics who were worried about the increasing intolerance of the "right" (De Kler and Van der Zande 1978).

Both organisations were of the opinion that assistance must lead to an insight into the freedom-hampering situations in society which, in turn, must result in actions in order to change the problem-causing societal structures and to prevent the causes of the individual problems (Arendshorst 1972; Moerkerk 1973).

### → Specific need of young people for comprehensive information

In the late 1960s in several countries, youth professionals argued in favour of comprehensive youth information centres in order to meet the need for information of young people that results from the following situation:

*We live in a complex society that offers so many possibilities and choices. In this society young people need information and assistance to understand what is available and how they can use the services which exist. Without such assistance, many will not have the opportunity to live effective lives and contribute to their community. In order to try out new roles and experiences, young people have a tendency to distance themselves from adults, like their parents. While this distancing is important to the exercise and acceptance of independence, it often removes young people from advice and support which would assist them at this important stage of their development to independency. This fledgling autonomy must be supported by offering information and counselling in a setting which young people accept or in a language and format which take into account the problems of transition to adult life. We live in an information era. While a lot of information is available, it is usually written or presented in a way in which it is difficult to understand, and is not always relevant to the new members, the newcomers to the society. Moreover, the available information is very fragmented among numerous organisations and services. (Faché 1972, p. 9)*

In Hilversum (the Netherlands, Jongeren informatie centrum) as well as in Munich (Germany, Jugendinformationszentrum (JIZ) 1967; Baumann 1988), the city youth service established a youth information centre on the basis of this motivation. The Centre d'Information Jeunesse in Paris was also established, in 1969, on the basis of this same view. It became the first centre of a network of 25 centres throughout France. This initiative of the French Ministry of Youth and Sports followed the finding in a national survey of young people in 1967 that there was a need for a comprehensive information centre where youngsters "can find information on all possible areas affecting their lives".

### → Mutual influences

The history of innovative approaches to youth information and counselling services is a chronicle of change and exchange. The initial visions of the founders have been revised and revised again. One important factor that has produced the programmes' redefinitions are contacts with other innovative organisations. For example, Info Jeugd in Ghent drew from the start on criticising the established, traditional assistance of youth and the individual casework model. In line with a move to tackle the causes of clients' problems and thanks to the contacts with Release in London and Amsterdam and JAC Amsterdam, growing attention was paid to the societal causes of problems and social action.

At the international level, there were different conferences and meetings where people could exchange information. The 1st European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres took place in 1972. This conference was not located in one place but travelled from Munich and on to Erlangen, Essen, Amsterdam, Amersfoort, Utrecht, Santpoort, Ghent, Mons and Brussels, where each time youth information and counselling centres were visited. The participants came from Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria (Faché 1973). In 1975, at Tihange (Belgium), the 2nd European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres was organised by the Centre National d'Information des Jeunes (Brussels).

In 1985, the Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse in Paris organised the first European Colloquium on Youth Information Centres in Marly-le-Roy. The French organisers used this international conference mainly to propagate and export the French concept of youth information centres. The French wanted to obtain international recognition of the concept and protect the logo (composed of the letters I and Y). During the colloquium, an International Liaison Committee was established, composed of representatives from different countries. This would lead to the creation of ERYICA in 1986, the secretariat of which is located in the Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse in Paris. Under pressure from the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, counselling was included in the name of this network, which changed into the European Youth Information and Counselling Association, ERYICA. This international association, which was subsidised by France, continued to carry out the tasks of the centre in Ghent (see chapter by Marc Boes in this volume). Also international comparative studies stimulated the exchange of ideas and concepts during the 1970s and 1980s (Faché 1973; Keil 1982; Deichsel 1987).

### → Issues of debate in the 1970s and 1980s

There were three questions at issue during the 1st European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres in 1972 that continued to be discussed throughout the 1970s:

1. advantages and disadvantages of a comprehensive service against subject-specialised services;
2. the differences between, and strong points of, three assistance concepts: youth information centres (YIC), youth counselling centres (YCC), and services that integrate youth information and counselling (YICC);
3. the social action of the youth information and counselling services.

### **Comprehensive or specialised services?**

In order to provide adequate coverage, a comprehensive youth information or counselling agency will usually be necessary as a first resort or a last resort, somewhere to go when you do not know where to get information or help, or somewhere to go when other sources fail. In the 1960s comprehensive services came into being in the United States, Canada and western European countries. They are comprehensive according to the target population of young people. Such population-specific services are comprehensive as far as subject areas are concerned (Faché 1972; Deichsel 1987). This principle of comprehensive provision means that any young person may walk in with any problem. This important working principle concerns the intake criteria. This means that youth information and counselling services offer help to anyone in the whole range of psychosocial, medical, juridical, and various practical questions and problems of life. The result being that the client does not need to make a self-diagnosis before calling upon a youth information and counselling service. This is not always the case with subject-specialised services, in which every request for assistance has to be as precise and clear as possible. The current intake criteria of specialised services are “persons having questions or problems in the field of ...”, followed by a restrictive list of fields, such as sexuality. As most youth information and counselling services have very broad intake criteria, they are faced with a wide variety of persons and problems. This immediately raises the question as to how these counsellors are able to handle the great variety of questions.

### **Youth information or counselling services?**

There are, depending on the kind of social support – information or counselling – three different types of comprehensive youth services: youth information centres (YIC), youth counselling centres (YCC) and services that integrate youth information and counselling (YICC).

Before dealing with the differences and the arguments in favour of each of these types, it is necessary to make a distinction between informing and counselling. Counselling means discussing with the person seeking assistance a problem formulated by this person in order to increase their insight into the problem. The counsellor helps the client explore thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and reach a clearer self-understanding, and then find and use their strengths so that they can cope more effectively with life by making appropriate decisions or by taking relevant action. In this context, counselling does not mean recommending something to someone, dissuading someone from doing something or persuading someone to do something, but is aimed at reinforcing the capacity to take action of the person seeking assistance. The discussion must enable this person to decide for themselves in matters that affect them and their situation (Lawton 1984). In this context, informing concerns so-called “social information” youngsters who are required to be able to act adequately in concrete life situations, in other words to be able to function socially and societally. Young people, in particular, encounter a lot of problems because they are “new” in our society.

In youth counselling centres, the focus is on counselling as it is described above. In youth information centres, workers give information via the telephone, letters, online or in face-to-face contact. Youngsters can also consult info-stands and databases on their own. A number of organisations consciously strive to integrate both kinds of support (information and counselling) in one service. For the public, some of the integrated youth information and counselling centres seem to be only information centres; they also call themselves such because that name implies a lower threshold for young people (for example, Info Jeugd in Ghent, Belgium).

Youth information centres can mainly be found in France, Spain, Portugal and Greece. In other European countries, counselling centres for young people or centres that integrate youth information and counselling in one service are found more often.

### **Social action**

Problems become apparent in the life of the individual, but the causes of these problems are not always, at least initially, bound to the individual. Clients' problems are frequently rooted in the society in which we live (for example, shortcomings in the situations as regards working, housing, school and leisure) and not in supposed individual inadequacies. In other words, many of the problems that young people experience are in fact collective as opposed to exclusively individual problems.

Youth information and counselling centres differ greatly in their vision of their role in relation to these societal causes of personal problems and thus in their conceptualisation of social action. Four different roles can be distinguished throughout Europe:

- Assistance to young people and social action are integrated. In a first approach, the workers should, over and above the giving of information or counselling, make their clients aware of the societal causes of the clients' problems. They should motivate and involve, when possible, their clients in social action, through which societal changes may occur. The workers regard their clients as people who report societal shortcomings and as potential collaborators in social action. Therefore, they are mainly interested in those groups of clients that report societal problems (for example, *Sosjale Joenit* in The Hague) (Mulder-de Bruin 1978).
- Assistance to young people and social action run parallel. To bring about societal changes is a difficult and complex process. From a second point of view, it is not justified to involve clients in this action because they already faced their personal problems. Indeed, clients will feel even more powerless if social action fails. But the defenders of this point of view feel that, in the long run, counselling only makes sense for the client and the counsellor if at the same time efforts are made to weaken or eliminate societal shortcomings. If not, it may be feared that counselling will operate as an alibi for the continuation of these societal problems. Contrary to the first viewpoint, social action is regarded as an activity that runs parallel to individual help and is undertaken by the counsellors without the clients' involvement (for example, *Info Jeugd* in Ghent and most JACs in the Netherlands) (De Turck and Martens 1978; De Beer 1980). If the clients in this approach are made aware of the societal basis of their problems, this is not in order to motivate them to social action, but in order to help them in their process of internalising new rights and opportunities (emancipatory help). It is known from experience (cf. women's emancipation) that people who have adapted to deprivation or discrimination oppose changes even if they will benefit in the long run.



- Assistance to young people and drawing attention to societal problems as a parallel task of workers. In this approach, counsellors should in the first place concentrate on helping the client. Yet the counsellor should report back to other appropriate organisations on which effects of their policies and societal structure are impairing the development of young people. This feedback function is seen as an additional function running parallel to the helping process.
- Only assistance to young people. From a fourth point of view, the only function of youth information and counselling centres is to give assistance to young people. The youth advocacy function, the feedback function, or social action are then the job of other agencies (most youth information centres).

All four of the above-mentioned approaches are to be found in youth information and counselling centres. However, they do not occur together in one centre. They constitute a basic choice. Most centres in Europe express their preference for assisting young people and, parallel to this, “putting pressure” by drawing attention to societal problems, but not including the client in social action (model 3).

### → Working principles of youth information and counselling services

Bringing youth information and counselling services under a common heading means that all of these services have some key features in common. These alternative forms of youth assistance differ fundamentally from established services of care, because of their low threshold. This low threshold is enhanced not only by the comprehensive service, but some other working principles contribute to the accessibility of youth information and counselling services: youth-friendly opening hours, immediate help, no fees, anonymity, confidentiality, client-centred approach and the informal attitude of the workers. We explain some of these principles in more detail and also focus on some other principles that grew out the innovative work in many centres (self-determination, prevention, outreach) (Faché 1987, 1990).

- Immediate help when the client asks for it: potential clients can just drop in and are helped. Many established services only provide help on an appointment basis. To provide help when help is desired, opening hours at youth information and counselling centres have been adapted to the students' and working youth's leisure time. This means being accessible in the evening as well as on Saturday afternoons.
- Confidentiality: many young people fear being caught in all kinds of dossiers and files. This fear is strong enough to keep them away from help in order to avoid identification. Therefore most centres provide anonymous help.
- A client-centred approach: instead of fitting the client's question within the help offer of the service, the counsellor in a youth information and counselling centre takes their cue from the need of the client, and, together with the latter, tries to find a solution to it in a creative and innovative way. This also involves the client being the real principal, even when minor clients are concerned and “parental authority” becomes an issue. A client-centred approach also means that the definition given by the client to his problem operates as a starting point for informing and counselling. It also means that the client will have to choose a possible solution, and that the first steps in the right direction lie with them.
- Self-determination: Biestek (1961, p. 103) provided a definition that is congruent with the definition of most workers: “The principle of client self-determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own choices and decisions .... The client's right to self-determination,

however, is limited by the client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making, by the framework of civil law and by the function of the agency."

- Preventive interventions: youth information and counselling centres have developed a variety of primary preventive interventions targeted at large numbers of young people. Some youth information and counselling centres have developed and disseminated "do-it-yourself information" in the form of leaflets on contraceptives, unemployment benefits, rental acts, drugs, etc. Next to these comprehensive youth information booklets, there are also more specialised leaflets or booklets dealing with one problem category (study grants, living alone in lodgings, unwanted pregnancy, etc.).
- Outreach: in Germany youth advice and counselling was for a long time seen as an integrated part of youth work in youth centres. These youth workers in youth centres and clubs are frequently approached by young people in trouble, but they do not always have the information or skills to help. In these cases, they must be able to use the staff at youth information and counselling services as consultants. This approach has also gained ground in other parts of Europe.

### → Staffing

Youth information and counselling centres range from those with a small group of volunteers providing a service one or two evenings a week to more substantial agencies staffed either by paid full-time and part-time personnel, or by larger teams of agency-trained volunteers co-ordinated by paid workers. The selection of both paid and unpaid workers greatly differs in the various agencies. According to the most extreme point of view, no selection is needed. In opposition to the advocates of no selection, the majority of the agencies operate standards of selection, for example, professional training in psychology, psychiatry, social work or youth work. The structure of teams obviously varies according to the kind of service provided. In agencies focusing on counselling, there is a predominance of social workers, psychologists, and educators. The staff in information and documentation centres (for example, the CIDJ in Paris) consists primarily of documentalists, computer specialists and related professionals.

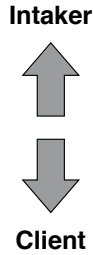
Consequently, the youth information and counselling services have shown some attempts to increase the participation of young people by using peer-group counsellors, successfully backed up by a network of professional counsellors (Mercier 1984).

There are also youth information and counselling centres exclusively staffed by young people indigenous to the youth communities they serve. Their requirements for staff have little to do with formal education and training programmes. They come close to being self-help groups.

### **Organisation of information and counselling activities**

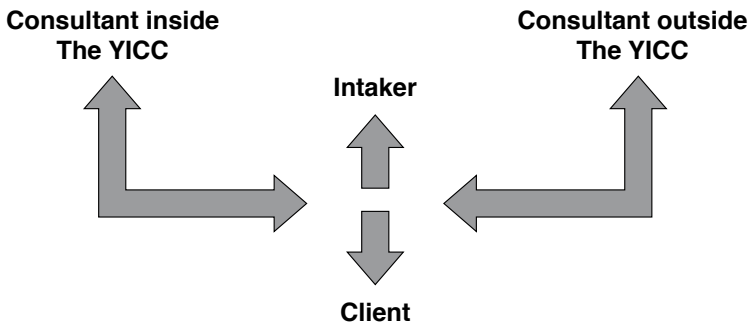
The following three models serve as a basis for the organisation of information and counselling activities:

- A team of front-line workers operates on a rotational basis when clients arrive with any problem that they might have. The counsellor must work together with the client to achieve an effective amelioration of the client's problematic situation. Due to continuous training and constantly updated documentation and knowledge, these workers often succeed in helping their clients in an effective way.

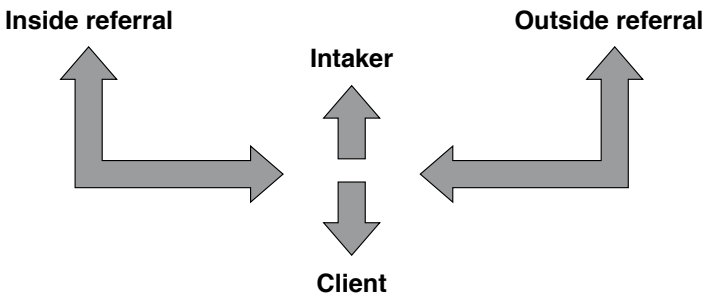


- But the diversity of problems facing workers at a youth information and counselling centre sometimes leads to the situation that their knowledge or skills are insufficient to offer effective help. Problems regarding social law, for instance, mostly require an up-to-date knowledge of legislation. Medical, psychiatric or juridical problems mostly require professional expertise.

In a second organisational model, a consultant is used by the initial contact person in order to help them with some aspects of a problem. The front-line workers make an appeal to the consultant when they become aware of the fact that they lack the expertise to offer effective assistance. The consultant can be a colleague with specific expertise (for example, a lawyer, a psychiatrist, a physician) who works in the same agency or a consultant from another helping agency.



- When the contact person feels unable to provide appropriate assistance, then they can refer the client to a more experienced colleague inside or outside the agency. This is mostly the case for medical, legal, psychiatric, drug and employment problems.



In the youth information and counselling centres, referral shows some specific characteristics. Firstly, innovative centres never refer a client to an agency but always to a particular person. Secondly, the initial contact person remains responsible for the client, when referring them to a specialist. The decision to refer the client is a joint one. If this referral does not yield the anticipated result, the counsellor must be "on hand" to receive the client again and to go through things a second time in order to find an alternative solution. In this way, it is possible to avoid the client getting lost. Therefore, the youth information and counselling centres make an agreement with outside helping agencies that the client may be referred back to the worker if the agency is not able to offer effective help to the client. In this respect, youth information and counselling services differ from established services that constantly refer clients to another service without referring them back to the original service. Moreover, the worker in a youth information and counselling centre tries to sustain an open relation with the client he/she refers to a specialist by telling the client that they can always return "if it does not work out".

The above-mentioned organisational models do not play the same role in the helping strategy of each youth information and counselling centre. The degree to which one of the models is dominant strongly depends on the expertise of the contact team, the scope of the intake criteria, and the policy of the agency. In certain centres, referral of clients occurs so frequently that they operate rather like a switchboard in the network of helping services. In order to limit referral as much as possible, other services invite specialised professionals (such as lawyers, physicians, career counsellors) to come once a week, on a fixed day and time, and help young people with specific problems. In the leaflet distributed by the centre, the days and times this assistance is directly available in the agency are mentioned.

### → Evaluation

If we were to evaluate youth information and counselling centres during the early years, we could say that these agencies introduced many innovative elements into informing and counselling young people. This is due to the fact that the fundamental point of departure of most comprehensive youth information and counselling centres is that they are client centred rather than method centred. Instead of fitting the client's question within the method of the agency, counsellors in the youth information and counselling services take their cue from the needs of the client, and, together with the latter, try to find a solution to the client's problem in a creative and innovative way. Innovative services are open to experimentation with different methods. They are not constrained by tradition (Faché 1989).

The following innovations are illustrative: immediate assistance when it is requested, whereas it was normal to make appointments for a specific day and time; anonymous assistance instead of the traditional questions about name, address, and age; the client (even if they are a minor) is the one who defines the task of the worker, whereas it was normal that the parents of the minor did so; assistance free of charge; attention paid to societal causes of particular problems instead of looking for individual inadequacies and adapting the client to the demands of society; the continuing responsibility of the worker in case of referral of the client instead of being content to simply refer the client elsewhere; treating the client as an articulate and competent person in relation to their own life situation instead of being patronising; not using too specific intake criteria; and systematic attention paid to preventive strategies.

As the workers enjoy a large degree of freedom of action and are exceptionally responsive to the needs of their clients, it is the youth information and counselling centres that have drawn attention to specific problems and the societal causes of particular problems that have been ignored by traditional helping agencies. They have also enlarged the scope of the service to youth in distress.

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# **The history of youth work with girls in the UK – targets from below?<sup>67</sup>**

*Janet Batsleer*

## **→ Introduction**

**S**tarting with a brief analysis of the long history of work with girls, from the mid-19th century to the present, this short essay focuses on some enduring issues. Attention to one moment – 1979 – offers the opportunity for an in-depth exploration and the consequent effects in youth work when it becomes a site for critical and radical democratic aspirations. Finally, through an exploration of the networks in which critical feminist youth work with girls was located in the UK, the essay points to some resources for thinking about the impact of new social movements in youth work. The aim here is to prevent the mistaken separating out of the “equalities agendas”, which were just as linked in their emergence to the consciousness of youth work as they were in their emergence into consciousness across whole societies. In consequence, the essay concludes with an exploration of themes of universalism and targeting, commonality and difference and questions their resonance for the contemporary moment.

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Youth work has always been de facto segregated, not only and most obviously in terms of class, but also in terms of gender and “race”. Nevertheless, the aspirations of some individuals and organisations involved in youth work have frequently been otherwise: their practice has constituted a living argument for greater social inclusivity. This has included an opening out of the question of what counts as human possibility and flourishing among young women. The opening out of such a question means moving away from simply ignoring young women and away from the assumption that received ideas about the specific roles of women as adults offered an accurate answer to the question of human flourishing for women. Of course, in their turn, initiatives and movements which have espoused greater openness and possibilities for young women have also frequently been blind to their own limitations and the ways in which they have themselves perpetuated forms of segregation and exclusion.

To declare my own colours: I have been active in youth work and in the feminist and anti-racist movements throughout my adult life since the 1970s. Some of this account therefore takes the form of reflection on issues in which I have been deeply and personally involved. Most recently, I have been an active participant in and supporter of the “Feminist Webs” initiative, based in the north-west of England, but active throughout the UK. Feminist Webs seeks to create a link between earlier practice in danger of becoming “hidden from history” and the practice of youth work with girls now, which seeks to go beyond normative femininity. Material from the archive was used during the workshop at the Ghent Conference on which this essay is based and can be found at [www.feminist.webs.com](http://www.feminist.webs.com) and in a number of emerging specialist archives, referenced at the end of this paper.

### → The long histories

The periodisation of youth work history has been discussed by both Filip Coussée (2006) and Bernard Davies (1999). Coussée has focused, along with other commentators (for example, Nava and McRobbie 1987), on the significance of the attention to the spaces of leisure as distinct from attention to work places as constituting the youth work field. I believe this periodisation is made more complex by a feminist-inspired analysis of that history, as youth work was significant as a space of employment for middle-class women claiming their place in the public domain, whilst often affirming the values and virtues of the domestic for the girls and young women they engaged with. It is therefore simultaneously constituted as a field by issues of female aspiration to employment and by attention to the social conditions of the poor, including their working lives.

I suggest the following periodisation:

- The 1870s: period of foundation of the YWCA and the Girls Friendly Society and the question of philanthropy. This period is characterised by the intensification of what has come to be known as the first wave of the women’s movement. Calls for female emancipation, particularly the vote, were intensifying as were more conservative and contradictory and yet female-based philanthropic initiatives, many of them inspired by evangelical Christian values.
- The 1910-14: period of the foundation of the National Organisation of Girls Clubs and the Girl Guides and the climax of influence of first-wave feminism. This period involved a trend among the women active in earlier organisations such as the Women’s Industrial Council, namely turning away from work-place issues and focusing on the leisure time of girls.
- 1920s-40s: the moment of citizenship. Following the eventual success of the campaign for women’s enfranchisement and the achievement of full adult

suffrage (in 1928 in the UK), women's suffrage societies became "societies for equal citizenship", proposing the equality of men and women in the public domain. This included a turning away from Victorian sexual mores and with that the necessity for separation of the sexes from the point of view of women. Men perceived this as a threat to masculinity and asserted the necessity of separateness in the boys' clubs, and therefore it was the girls clubs which made movements towards mixing (Butterfield and Spence 2009). Also in this period a preoccupation with the nature of relationships between boys and girls, and a concern with the extent of promiscuity among some working-class girls, led to an emerging critique of segregation. Girls' sexual activity came under scrutiny in this period. "Cyril Burt suggested that sexual activity outside marriage was the main indicator of delinquency among girls with girls categorised re: vulnerability and culpability. Girls love of luxuries was seen as a causative factor in prostitution" (Turnbull 2001). Penny Tinkler (1995) has argued that this continued into the Second World War. In 1944, the National Council of Girls Clubs became the National Association of Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs.

- The 1950s: the moment of the "charm school" of femininity. This is the period in which the explicit presence of girls is first marginalised and then erased. In 1953 there is a further name change to the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls Clubs, finally arriving at a moment of invisibility in 1961 and a renaming as the National Association of Youth Clubs. However, the Guides and the YWCA remained single sex throughout the period. Femininity in the youth clubs of the 1950s was strongly marked by a stress on the accomplishments appropriate to potential wives and homemakers, but, paradoxically, this is also a period of strong female leadership and development of the professional theory of youth work as social group work. Josephine McAlister Brew, pioneer of social group work, was also the originator of the McAlister Brew courses on Good Grooming for Girls. The Duke of Edinburgh Award set up a section for girls in the 1950s called "Design for Living". This programme was created by Phyllis Gordon Spencer. According to her *Daily Telegraph* obituarist (7 August 2008): "When Phyllis set up the [Duke of Edinburgh award] programme for girls, she thought of the girl in the inner city who never thought of getting themselves into the countryside, nor the type to join the Guides or even the local youth club. She said at that time 'We were interested in girls who never thought of joining anything. With this programme they didn't have to wear a uniform, they didn't have to commit themselves to anything. We had to attract them into learning more about things that might interest them.'" So, the first syllabus was submitted to the editor of *Vanity Fair* (a glossy and expensive women's magazine). It focused on grooming and poise; the art of make-up and hair care; what to wear; how to run a home; cookery; entertaining friends. This course ("Design for Living") ran into the 1970s as did the McAlister Brew "Good Grooming: Courses for Girls" in the London Union of Youth Clubs.
- The 1960s-70s: in the context of the international resonance of the US civil rights and anti-war movements, second-wave feminism emerged, challenging the established responses to girls in youth work. Jalna Hanmer's 1964 "Girls at leisure" report commissioned by the YWCA and London Union of Youth Clubs is often seen as the first "straw in the wind", pointing to the re-emergence of feminism as a force in youth work. The study took place in the context of the most positive attention youth work had yet received as a public service: the moment of the implementation of the recommendations of the Albemarle Report, which established the first nationally recognised professional training for the Youth Service. According to Jean Spence (2010), in 1964, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the London Union of Youth Clubs (LUYC) set

up a committee to “study the needs and interests of girls”, to “provide training materials for leaders working with girls in mixed clubs” and to “discover why girls are not making use of the youth service”.

The subsequent research study, undertaken by Jalna Hanmer (1964, in Spence 2010), noted that girls “do not seem to be as highly regarded as boys in clubs”; that “‘girls only’ activities – no matter what they are – are highly valued ... provided [the girls] do not feel that their wish to associate with boys is being curtailed”; and that “a mixed club should have both men and women staff ... There are fewer women than men in the Youth Service and what is more serious, fewer women are being trained for the work.”

From this research project followed many others – although most did not happen until more than a decade later – which investigated the marginalisation and unequal opportunities afforded to girls by the Youth Service.

### → 1979, the climax of the impact of second-wave feminism on youth work?

In 1976 – feminist women youth workers were already meeting in London in Earlham Street Women’s Centre. 1977 saw “Boys Rule Not OK” weekends running at Avon Tyrell, the residential centre of the National Association of Youth Clubs and 1979 saw the election of the first woman prime minister in the UK, Margaret Thatcher, and the appointment of a Girls Work Officer and staff for a Girls Work Unit at the National Association of Youth Clubs. This paradoxical confluence of events in the presence of a woman at the centre of national politics, who explicitly rejected feminism at a time when anti-sexist youth work with girls was gathering strength, is central to understanding why the girls work movement of the 1970s both flourished and then went into rapid decline. In 1987, though not without provoking a national campaign against its closure, the Girls Work Unit at the NAYC was closed.

In time and as a consequence of the hegemonic project of Thatcherism, the “targeting from below” (to use Davies’ term) which was generated from feminist activism, gave way to the new managerialist targets, such as those of reducing teenage pregnancy and of encouraging active participation. Public-sector cuts throughout the 1980s and the determination to generate “efficiency” in services led to the “problem orientation” of funding. Simultaneously, youth unemployment was accompanied by a discourse on “enterprise”. Jean Spence (2010) has argued that the turn to managerialism was a sign of the defeat of an earlier activist movement.

The cultural and political context of the women’s liberation movement in the late 1970s shaped the context for these interventions in youth work. In particular, the creation of women’s cultural networks, which were explicitly feminist, was of immense significance in supporting this wave of feminist practice in youth work. For example, in London, there was a Earlham Street Women’s Centre, the Women’s Research and Resource Centre, and a bookshop and cafe, Sisterwrite, as well as several women’s theatre groups, such as Monstrous Regiment (named after John Knox’s description of “the monstrous regiment of women”), film projects and arts collectives organised through Women in Media. Rape crisis centres and helplines, and the emerging presence of women’s refuges, created an enduring challenge to patriarchal violence. By 1980 there were 99 women’s refuge groups and 200 refuges across the UK. Important among these projects were women’s publishing houses, reissuing forgotten classics of women writers and feminist thought (such as Virago) or supporting new and emerging voices, including explicitly lesbian-feminist voices

likely to be excluded from the mainstream (such as Sheba and The Women's Press). These cultural networks were present in most of the major cities in the UK, North America and throughout Europe. In the UK, emerging young women's projects were linked to these centres and some of these projects – for example, West End Young Women's Centre in Newcastle – still exist. Most, however, disappeared as this wave of feminist activism faded. Many but by no means all were in London: the Camden Unemployed Young Women's Centre, Hammersmith Young Women's project, as well as Detached Work projects in Westminster and White City provided practical inspiration in the shape of videos and resource packs for practitioners country-wide, as did projects in most major cities across the four nations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some undertook systematic research into youth service provision for girls in order to document the limitations of what was on offer and to draw attention to the existence of unequal opportunities. Women active in the Northern Ireland Association of Youth Clubs created a resource called "Waiting our turn: working with young women in youth clubs", a title which captured the experience of girls waiting for a turn at the pool table at youth clubs all over the British Isles (Morgan and McArdle 2009).

Information about the women's liberation movement circulated through a newsletter called *WIRES*, which was set up by the 1975 Women's Liberation Conference in Manchester and through a magazine, *Spare Rib*, which was launched in 1972 and run by a feminist collective from 1973, and was available throughout the period of the "girls work movement", ceasing publication in 1993. Early information about "girls work projects" circulated through the advertising columns and news reports of *Spare Rib* alongside the adverts and articles in *WIRES*. This then formed the basic cultural resource on which youth workers, and specifically those youth work projects linked to the Girls Work Unit of the NAYC, could draw. For example, the classified ads section of *Spare Rib*, Issue 62 from September 1977, contains an advert, placed by Janet Hunt, for two full-time workers for "Experimental project work with girls" in Birmingham and in Bretton New Town, Peterborough. "The workers will be using detached work methods," the ad says, "to reach and relate to adolescent girls aged about 13-16 who make a regular use of street and leisure amenities and are thought to be 'at risk'." In the same magazine, there are adverts for WEA women's studies classes run by Barbara Taylor and Sally Alexander on aspects of women's history; jobs with refuges for battered women and in a childcare collective; an advert by "one liberated gay male writer" looking for someone to type; for rooms in shared houses; for publications about the Goddess and for *Sappho*, a lesbian-feminist magazine; for groups; for therapists; for travelling companions and a large advert which appeared in every edition of *Spare Rib* at that time entitled "What every woman should know about vibrators".

If there were a need for a camerawoman to teach girls photography, it was possible to go to the Women's Film Collective. Did you want to offer a DIY session for girls? How about women in manual trades? They would undoubtedly be able to suggest someone. Young women had their own magazine – *Shocking Pink* – which ran from 1981-82 and again from 1987-92, and the publishing house Sheba published a selection of articles written by young women and published in *Spare Rib* called "Girls are powerful" (Hemmings 1985).

One of the staff of the Girls Work Unit, then working for the National Youth Bureau, Kerry Yeung, published a collection called *Working with girls: a reader's route map* in 1984, the appendix of which gives a clear impression of the range of resources which the activists of the women's liberation movement had created. In turn, youth workers and youth work was contributing to what might be termed the cultural capital of the

movement through the myriad of projects running in local neighbourhoods, and in national and international contexts. The girls work movement had its own magazine – *Working with Girls Newsletter* – produced between 1981 and 1987. It was established by the first worker at the Girls Work Unit, Trish McCabe. The preoccupations and politics of this work have been well analysed by Jean Spence (2010) through an analysis of the contents of this magazine and of the girls work projects it supported, and I cannot hope to add to that comprehensive analysis here. The important point in the context of this essay is that youth work at this moment was inextricably bound up with the wider politics and contestations of the democratic movements for women's liberation as this second wave of feminism reached its height.

A further aspect of this movement was the importance of the student culture in the cities where the alternative cultural resources were being developed. A long tradition of women who had access to opportunities provided through higher education seeking to develop similar opportunities in neighbourhoods in close proximity to those universities was, often unknowingly, reactivating a tradition that dates back to the university settlement movement. Some of the women involved in the girls work movement were already youth workers who had been inspired by feminism. At least as many were young women inspired and active in feminism, including lesbian feminism, seeking to share their resources and offer an education to girls that challenged received notions of femininity. A number of important girls work initiatives were in fact resourced as part of research projects based in universities and partly staffed by postgraduate researchers: for example, the work of the Women Risk Aids project (WRAP papers) linked to youth work in Manchester; the work of Sue Lees and Celia Cowie on the use of the term “slags” directly inspired an NAYC poster series including the poster: “We hate it when you call girls slags”. Professor Christine Griffin's early ESRC project, which resulted in her book *Typical girls*, was supported by her other role as a part-time youth worker in Birmingham. Trish McCabe, who established the *Working with Girls Newsletter*, was also a student at the Birmingham CCCS in the late 1970s and a youth worker. She edited *Feminism for girls – An adventure story* with Angela McRobbie, in part as a resource for practitioners.

The role of the National Union of Students' Women's Officers also deserves further attention as these positions continued to create a channel for conversation between students and the wider women's movement in the major cities. Interestingly, the activism of this period was reminiscent of the activism of the period of suffrage agitation. The minute books of the Manchester University Settlement record one Christabel Pankhurst as having organised a drama group for girls leading to a production of *Macbeth*, before she moved on to dedicate herself fully to the suffrage movement (Batsleer 2003).

It is also important to recognise the role played by long-standing youth work organisations in ambivalently supporting but also experiencing a sense of trouble about feminist girls work in this period. It was the London Union of Youth Clubs (which had started life as the London Organisation of Girls Clubs), along with the Young Women's Christian Association, which supported the committee that commissioned the research that led to Jalna Hanmer's (1964) publication “Girls at leisure”, now widely recognised as an early indication of the period of feminist activism to come. At the same time, the London Union of Youth Clubs became the focus of a particularly fierce conflict surrounding the “unhealthy” influence of “women's lib”, which led to the instant dismissal of one of their area officers, Val Marshall, in 1981 (Spence 2010). In a similar way, the National Association of Youth Clubs first supported and then withdrew support and closed its Girls Work Unit in 1987, using the argument

so often used to close down radical initiatives that the issues raised by the project were so important that they should now be mainstreamed. The campaign against its closure was spearheaded by another women's network which had created a space for itself within a long-standing youth work organisation: the Women's Caucus of the Community and Youth Service Association/Community and Youth Workers Union. This network too was later to be closed down. It is worthy of note, however, that it was the YWCA once more that supported some of the few feminist initiatives in youth work during the "downturn" of activism in the 1990s and early years of the 21st century. Evidence of this can be found especially in the Respect Young Mums campaign, which challenged prevailing stereotypes of young mothers by being grounded in an active youth work process of empowerment and participation.

One of the sources of tension between the older youth work organisations and the new feminist-inspired girls work may have been in the very different organisational styles and approaches of the new movements. Young activists in girls work were influenced by the self-help mutual aid and networking style of organising of the wider women's liberation movement, very different from the formal decision-making and bureaucratic committee structures of the older youth work organisations. One of the issues faced by women who organised in what might be termed a more anarchist-communitarian style was how to work through conflict, disagreement and issues of implicit and assumed power. The question of different analyses of the sources of women's oppression was of course present in girls work as in the wider women's liberation movement, and this difference and division was made more complex by the ways in which hegemonic patterns of social dominance seemed to structure the work and communication of even the most revolutionary groups. So, just as the image of the revolutionary male militant, bereft of ties, leading the vanguard of the revolution, was scrutinised by socialist feminists (Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright 1980), so the assumptions of those who claimed the right to speak on behalf of "all women" were scrutinised and found wanting. Lesbian feminists challenged the homophobia which kept lesbians invisible in the women's liberation movement, even to the extent of claiming that heterosexual women should not write about lesbians. In the *Feminist Review*, No. 13, an editorial describes an angry response to Mica Nava's account of work in a girls' project: *Everybody's Views Were Just Broadened*. Black women challenged the narrow Eurocentric focus of white feminism, claiming in Alice Walker's words that "feminism is to womanism as lavender is to purple". Different analyses of the focus of campaigning led to different views of relationships with men, both politically and personally and to very different perspectives of working with the police, in relation for example to "Reclaim the Night" marches. All these discussions were present in feminist youth work, and it seems likely that the dominance of particular perspectives at any moment owed as much to the time and resources committed by individuals and particular groups as to any systematic democratic resolution of issues such as the place of separate work and mixed work; the issues of women's safety and how best to secure it and the role of men in the movement as allies, prepared to run crèches and argue for movement demands, or as enemies: "guilty men" to be excluded from discussion and debate and sent away to raise their own consciousness on issues of violence, as some of them faithfully did in "men against sexism" groups.

Later constructions of the history of the movement have very much oversimplified this complex culture, sometimes suggesting that there were simply no lesbians and no black women or working-class women present. The networks which women youth workers were part of are testimony to the fact that claims of exclusion of engagement with "difference" from the movement are not grounded in the experience of the time. By suggesting briefly the biographies of some of the key figures in relation

to second-wave feminism and youth work, it is possible to give an account of the networks they were part of. In the process, some light may be cast on the question of the construction of alternatives and potentially radical democratic spaces capable of offering prospects for a more egalitarian and woman-friendly society.

Jalna Hanmer, for example, whose 1964 work for the YWCA we have already mentioned, is recorded as addressing the American Sociology Association in 1976 on the subject of the women's liberation movement and violence against women. She went on to found the first women's studies MA programme in the UK at Bradford University, was active for many years on issues of violence against women, and is now a key figure in the development of the Feminist Archive North, based at Leeds University. Pratibhar Parmar worked in Bradford as a youth worker as well as in India and then for Sheba publishers. She contributed important thinking on gender, race and class in work with Asian girls (Parmar 1988) and went on to become a filmmaker working with, among others, Alice Walker on her film about female genital mutilation, *Warrior marks*. Janet Paraskeva Hunt (who started the first "Boys Rule Not OK" weekends and advertised the NAYC post in *Spare Rib* discussed earlier) went on to become Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, and the Law Society and now works as a First Civil Service Commissioner. Olive Morris founded Brixton Black Women's Group and as a Social Science student at Manchester in 1975 supported the establishment of Manchester Black Women's Co-op with young mothers in Moss Side. Olive Morris went on to found the Organisation of Women of African, African-Caribbean and Asian Descent. Sadly, she died in 1979 but her influence is felt by colleagues teaching on youth and community work professional education programmes to this day (Watt, undated). Val Carpenter, the Girls Work Officer at the NAYC who was sacked in 1987, has been central to the re-engagement with Alinsky-style broad-based organising in the UK, and has developed work on diversity strategies through her consultancy, Diversity Hub. These are just a few stories of women who went on to have significant influence beyond youth work. They do not include those of the women and men who have remained engaged in and by youth work, such as Kerry Young, author of the influential text *The art of youth work*, and Trevor Sinclair, whose Work with Boys initiative emerged as a direct response to the feminist girls work movement. Such biographies of key figures, whose lives touched the field of youth work briefly and who, perhaps, found a grounding in youth work before moving on to work on a wider canvas, are reminiscent of the aspirations of those who founded the University Settlements. They indicate something of the social capital which the girls work network in youth work contributed to, and on which, in its turn, it was able to draw.

By 1997, with the election of New Labour, the driving force in the development of youth policy was the Social Exclusion Unit. Its key report *Bridging the gap* (1999) and its report on young people (2000) led to a focus on the Careers Guidance service, soon to be transformed by the introduction of Connexions and the Personal Adviser role, the Youth Justice Board, and the Teenage Pregnancy strategy and a focus on young runaways. The argument which had been implicit in the activism of the girls work movement, namely that universal provision was nothing of the kind, being based on "the dominance of the male agenda", seemed curiously not to lead to an enlargement of the concept of universalism but rather to lend weight to the targeted provision pioneered by the PAT 12 team under New Labour (Davies 2008). As the New Labour project in its final years became increasingly regulatory and controlling, young women feminist activists in the north-west of England became engaged with the work of recovery of the memory of earlier activism. This work still seeks to question the nature of femininity; it still overlaps strongly with lesbian and gay organising, although this is no longer disguised in any way; it still struggles

with the racialised limitations and predominant “whiteness” and Eurocentrism of much feminist discourse. Their work – which is part an intergenerational oral history project, part online resource and part youth work project – can be accessed at [www.feministwebs.com](http://www.feministwebs.com). The questions remain of how much the invisibility of gender in the universalising references to “youth” in “youth policy” matters and of whether this invisibility still codes for the dominance of certain forms of hegemonic masculinity: these questions are still urgent ones.

Despite the pressures, some older feminist workers such as Huffty Reay in Newcastle and Lilian Pons in Greater Manchester, who had had to adapt to new regimes and as a consequence work with greater contradiction and tension, had tried to sustain a feminist approach throughout the Thatcher and New Labour period. They formed something of a bridge to the emergent practice.

In locating these UK discussions in an international context, it seems important to indicate that there are wide connections and much work to be done across Europe to make those connections. Dr Judith Metz in Amsterdam has instigated further conversation on this essay, which suggests many similarities between the experience in the Netherlands and in the UK, as well as links with Flemish Youth Work. There are also evidently strong connections with the histories of the impact of black politics in youth work (see Diane Watt’s essay in this volume). Much work remains to be done on this “youth work paradox” of gender, simultaneously neglected and central to its history.

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## Timeline (UK)

- 1853 YWCA
- 1910 Girl Guides
- 1911 National Organisation of Girls Clubs
- 1926 National Council of Girls Clubs
- 1944 National Association of Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs
- 1953 National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls Clubs
- 1961 National Association of Youth Clubs
- 1964 Jalna Hanmer's "Girls at leisure" report commissioned by the YWCA and London Union of Youth Clubs
- 1977 Boys Rule Not OK Conference
- 1979 Girls Work Officer appointed by the NAYC
- 1987 NAYC Girls Work Unit closed

# **The development of black youth work in England**

*Diane Watt*

## **→ Introduction**

**F**rom the 1960s onwards, the West Indian Organisations Coordinating Committee (WIOCC) in Manchester, were amongst those that played a leading role in enabling the emergence of community-led programmes for young black people in areas of education, employment and cultural development. This approach was consistent with the African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child”. Sallah and Howson (2007) further argue that the decision not to support the black community during this period may have been based on a rationalisation that if there were a “problem” it would be reduced and even disappear through the process of assimilation or was unlikely to be a permanent feature of British life. This is in spite of the fact that from the 16th century onwards, black people have been inextricably linked to the structure of British society both as slaves and free men and women (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe 1985). The Jamaican poet Louise Bennett also referred to the movement of colonial and ex-colonial peoples to the diaspora as colonisation in reverse. However, before exploring in-depth the development of black youth work in the UK, this paper will start with a

historical overview of post-war migration from the Caribbean islands, in particular the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*.

## → Background

The arrival in 1948 of approximately 500 immigrants from Jamaica on the *Empire Windrush*, the vast majority of whom were men, was to mark the beginning of a mass and permanent presence of British subjects of a different colour. This event came to symbolise what has since been described as:

*... a process which would transform Britain from its supposed cultural and racial homogeneity into a multi-cultural/multi-racial society. It was to mark the beginning of a long, uneven and contradictory process in which the UK's long Imperial history was to come "home" in the embodied presence of those who had previously been seen – almost exclusively – solely in pictorial or imaginary form ... It was the beginning of a transformatory process in which Africans, Asian and Caribbean migrants – and generations of their descendants – were to construct new narratives of home, new belongings, upon and alongside old ones. (Lewis and Young 1998, p. 78)*

Levine (1987) argues that a distinguishing feature of movements in the Caribbean is that in most cases it was encouraged or even promoted by home governments who had negotiated migrant labour agreements with the United States and Canada. Another important characteristic that differentiated Caribbean emigration is that it was largely voluntary. Whilst maintaining the traditional pattern of inter-island movement, Britain became a favoured destination after the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which restricted entry into the United States. The early 1960s also witnessed increased migration to Canada, which was facilitated by the removal of restrictions to black immigration in 1962. In 1963, the United States abolished the quotas for Caribbean migrants; and many people who first went to the UK, then moved to Canada and the United States.

Webster (1998, p. xiii) argues that this was at a time when white migrants including the Irish were classified as "suitable immigrants" and black migrants as "the colour problem". With the exception of those from southern Ireland, Irish people were also described as being "as bad as the darkies" (Patterson 1965, p. 179). This is notwithstanding the fact that from the 16th century onward black people have been inextricably linked to the structure of British society both as slaves and free men and women. In the words of Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe (1985, pp. 7-8):

*Our presence in 18th-century England was an accepted reality. Black women and men sold at auctions, the bust of "blackamoors", emblems of the trade, commonly adorned local town halls, ... Freed and runaway slaves were conspicuous among London's beggars and were known as "St.-Giles Blackbirds". Indeed, many black communities today such as Bristol, Liverpool and Cardiff were established long before post-war immigration of recent years.*

Accordingly, Pilkington (1988) argues that the entire phenomenon of migration to England was further complicated by the assumption of a shared heritage with the "mother country". Sevlon's novel *The Lonely Londoners* deals, however, with the shattering of illusion of belonging. This was at a time when white migrants including the Irish were classified as "suitable immigrants" and black migrants "the colour problem". Black male sexuality was also viewed as a threat to white femininity, and in 1957 Collins, who at that time worked as a journalist, reported that the arrival of West Indian women "immigrants" was particularly welcomed by the British male "who feels that she will provide a companion for the coloured

male immigrant, who will keep away from British women". During the autumn of the following year, the Eugenics Society printed a broadsheet calling for research into the degree and result of miscegenation. It was argued that the arrival of male migrants without their female partners had produced "frustrations, temptations, prostitution and half-caste children" (Bertram 1958, p. 16). The British Daily Mirror newspaper also published an article entitled "Introducing to you ... the boys from Jamaica". Included in this title was the question "Are they stealing our women?" The *Mirror* went on to reassure its readers that half of those arriving in Britain from Jamaica were wives and their children "coming to join their husbands" (Waterhouse 1958). The *Daily Mirror* article on the boys was the only reference to women, and Morokvasic (1983, p. 16) draws attention to the representation of female migrants as "an accessory of a process they are not really taking part in". In these studies women are primarily regarded as: "... followers, dependants, unproductive persons, isolated, illiterate, ...". Sociologically, migrant women are only visible within the framework of the family. Yet in her study of early Jamaican female migrants, Foner (1979, p. 67) found that for a number of them, England offered the opportunity to be more independent. Instead of having to depend upon their husbands, these women had access to their own wage packets. There were also women in Foner's study who felt they had less independence in England than they had in Jamaica. In the absence of the extended family, they often cited difficulties with child-minding as the principal reason. During the post-war migration period there were groups of white women who also experienced this sense of "not belonging". They themselves were migrant women who had been separated from their families and were recruited in low paid, low status jobs. Similarly, there were black women who worked in the clothing industry, some parts of which were notorious for sweatshop conditions and low wages. However, although both groups experienced crude anti-immigrant hostility, it was black women who were seen as threatening the degeneration of the British race and were characterised as incapable of domestic or familial life (Webster 1998, p.xi). In general, migrants from Cyprus, Malta, Italy and eventually Poland were viewed as acceptable. Opposition to the black presence was such that in 1964 the Labour Party lost its West Midland seat to the Tory candidate, Peter Griffith, whose rallying cry throughout the election was "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote labour".

### → Education

Despite these experiences, Britain was nevertheless perceived as a prosperous place where migrants from the Caribbean islands would be able to earn enough money and return home within five years. This was indeed not the case and confronted with this reality, for the majority, the realisation of returning home and "living the good life" can best be described as an aspiration or a myth (Anwar 1979). The Department of Education and Skills (DES) also went on to define the task of education as "the successful assimilation of immigrant children". In the book *Tell it like it is: how our schools fail black children*, the poet Benjamin Zephaniah wrote (2005, pp. 151-152):

*... in assembly one morning our headmaster told the school that because the school now had an Afro-Caribbean (that's me), he would now like to change things a little. He then proclaimed that the school was to have a cricket team and that I was to be the Captain. In 2004 it may seem obvious that not all Black people love cricket but back then in 1960 this headmaster just failed to believe that I couldn't stand the game, he insisted that I was a "born cricketer"... Every time I repeated my hatred of the game people smiled, when I told my fellow pupils that I had never handled a cricket bat I was told to "stop messing about", I felt well and truly stereotyped.*

The period of assimilation was characterised by a series of ad hoc responses to the educational needs of immigrant pupils designed to compensate for their assumed deficiencies with the minimum of disruption to the educational needs of indigenous children. The 1985 Swann Report, *Education for all*, summed up the period of assimilation “as one which gave recognition to the existence of a single cultural criterion, which was white, Christian and English speaking” (Swann Report 1985, p. 196). Nevertheless the assumed “deficiencies” of immigrants were used as justification for their over-representation in Education Subnormal Schools (ESN). In fact, much of the earlier debates on the self-esteem of black children in British schools was subsumed under the notion of “disadvantaged” (Plowden Report 1967). This was based on the assumption of universal needs and equality of access by society to social services in which both black and white working-class children suffer similar disadvantage of housing, employment, family stress and educational attainment. Arguments of this nature also played a major role both in educational debates and practice in that it tended to play down factors of race and ethnicity as dimensions of inequality. Accordingly, the self-concept theorists played an influential role in the shaping of multicultural educational debates. As a consequence of their input, multicultural education policies and practice took on a remedial emphasis (Mirza 1992). The prescribed curriculum changes that provided the mainstay of policy initiatives were aimed at enhancing self-esteem, identified to be the source of the education “problem”. Stone (1981) argued that a general educational concession to enhance the self-esteem of black girls was the inclusion of Caribbean-flavoured cooking and hair braiding to the home economics curriculum. Thus, in commenting on the role of multicultural education, the authors of the Burnage Report (1989) wrote: “Multi-culturalism does not in fact deal with or assist in the understanding of the complexity of people’s lives and kinship and does not draw upon the lives and experiences of the students who are being taught”.

Coard (1971) argued therefore that ESN schools were “being utilized as a dumping ground for black children. This was especially so for those who had recently come from the Caribbean to join their parents; often after a separation of several years. These children were therefore encountering various degrees of emotional disturbance; on top of the normal cultural and other adjustment problems associated with a sudden move to an entirely new environment.” As a direct response to the concerns of black parents, Coard published his book *How the West Indian child is made educationally sub-normal in the British educational system*. Following his decision to write this book, he stated: “I then took a critical decision. I would address the book explicitly to black parents. Not to teachers, not to education and political authorities, not to the public at large; exclusively to black parents. I wanted to get them conscious of the problems, and organised to deal with them. I wanted them to feel personally spoken to: to recognise that this was a problem that they had to get up and tackle, not rely on any others to do on their behalf.”<sup>68</sup>

Coard’s book was seen as the catalyst for the mobilisation of thousands of black parents throughout the country. This led to the establishment of various black youth groups and the development of black supplementary schools. Chevannes and Reeves (1987, p. 149) argue that the emergence of Saturday supplementary schools in the black community represents a collective strategy to combat the inadequate education available to black children. Mirza (1992) argues that black supplementary schools are not simply a response to mainstream failure. In reality they are far more radical and subversive than their quiet conformist exteriors suggest. Unlike mainstream

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68. [www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/feb/05/schools.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/feb/05/schools.uk)

schooling, where acting white is seen as the key to success, black supplementary schools represent an attempt to provide sacred spaces where children are able to combine academic achievements with being black (Mirza 1992, p. 274).

The emergence of black supplementary schools from the late 1960s onwards was taking place at a time when political debates on young black immigrants, especially in the field of youth work, was underpinned by notions of “assimilation” and “integration”. This was clearly evident in the Hunt Report (1967), *Immigrants and the Youth Service*, which concluded that “... if one were to accept that the Youth Service should provide separate facilities for each racial group then one might just as well basically accept that racial groups should live in separate communities of their own ...” (Hunt 1967, p. 168). Within a year of the publication of this report, the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) sponsored a further study by Bryan Hartley, which was undertaken between 1968 and 1971. In his report, “The final report of a three-year experimental project on coloured teenagers in Britain”, Hartley stated that the terms of reference as laid down by the DES were to “promote the integration of coloured teenagers between the ages of 14-21 in Great Britain”. The financial resources available were £4700 per annum including salaries and expenses.

Given this emphasis on integration, as opposed to focusing exclusively on the needs of young black people, Hartley (1971) decided that the project would seek to:

1. investigate the needs of young people, both white and coloured in the twilight zones of our towns and cities by means of community surveys, and then try to see that the youth service and other organisations meet these needs;
2. arrange educational projects on race relations for white teenagers in youth clubs and elsewhere;
3. arrange experimental courses in changing attitudes through drama and other media;
4. encourage coloured teenagers to participate in the normal courses provided by the Youth Service;
5. encourage coloured adults to become full- or part-time youth workers;
6. arrange conference, seminars, etc., on race relations for youth club leaders, unattached workers, etc.

John (1981, p. 3) argues that although Hartley’s work in 1971 was based on the recommendations of the Hunt Report, he nevertheless pointed to its limitations:

*Much has been learnt since the Hunt report about the difficulties of running a multi-racial youth club. Many youth workers are now sadder but wiser people. Faced with the reality of the situation, the workers in the field have quietly cast aside the Hunt report. Some administrators, however, stick adamantly to it as though it were the Holy Bible. They insist that they want multi-racial clubs or nothing at all. The consequence of this is that in some areas coloured organisations find it impossible to get grant aid for their activities. I would strongly recommend that the DES take steps to remedy this situation so that grant aid can be made available to coloured organisations.*

In his evidence to the 1969 Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration on the difficulties faced by workers in the development of multiracial youth clubs, Hartley also stated that “It is too facile to make scapegoats of those leaders who fail to run a multi-racial youth club successfully; they can only swim so far against the tide. Their failure only reflects that of society in general to come to terms with the coloured minority in our midst” (John 1981, p. 2).

Following Hartley's report, in 1972 the National Youth Bureau published a report on "Youth service provision for young immigrants". In January 1973, the National Association of Youth Service Clubs planning group met to consider an outline proposal for a research and development project on the problem of youth work in multiracial areas; the first paragraph stated that: "... the constant reminder of the 'race riots' warning suggest that 'race riots' would inevitably result from the absence of racial harmony. Young people are identified as the potential perpetrators and they must therefore be the target group. But not just 'young people', black teenagers are the focus of attention" (John 1981, p. 9). The proposal for the multiracial project was also justified on the grounds that in terms of training, the Youth Service was ill-equipped to take on board these tasks. Furthermore, there was uncertainty as to whether or not multiracial or separate clubs are the answer to what was seen as the problem.

Harley's report contained nine recommendations, Recommendation 1 of which pointed to the urgent need for research into racial violence. Of equal urgency was Recommendation 7, which emphasised the need for a rigorous and scientific evaluation of all aspects of the Youth Service. However, John (1981, p. 9) argued that without reference to any of Hartley's recommendations, the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) chose instead to react to his statement that "one of the major difficulties is that no attempt has been made to collate systematically the body of knowledge which already exists in the Youth Service about working in a multi-racial situation to pass onto other youth workers. Much valuable information has been lost because most of the leaders who have run multi-racial clubs do not seem to have any sort of record of what happened".

This statement of the "problem" in turn influenced the development of the multi-racial project and the NAYC identified two significant areas of research. However, John (1981, p. 10) argued that given the lack of stability within multiracial areas, particularly in large towns and cities, information was needed on the grounds that: "The youth worker in this situation has to work with young people of many different kinds, coloured, disturbed, coming from broken homes, on probation, out of work. All this is set against a backcloth of almost continual change, both within the club and group within the community".

Secondly, there was a stated lack of knowledge as to the type of skills necessary for dealing with situations of this nature, hence a feeling of frustration and bewilderment amongst workers. In 1973 an "outline proposal" for the project was submitted to the Department of Education and Science. Funding for the research over a three-year period was approved and in November 1973, Gus John was appointed director of the project. This was at a time when there were significant numbers of black young people in some major cities, yet there were no social provisions made. Many of these young people would spend their days hanging around on the streets (Sallah and Howson 2007). In 1972 the Youth Service Information Centre (YSIC) undertook a survey to assess developments since the publication of the Hunt Report. They concluded that the "Youth Service was at a crossroad and that it wanted to cling to the idea that it should be open to everyone and integrationist – the classic colour-blind approach". In his paper, *The Multiracial Project: Some Issues of Definition and Approach*, John (1981, p. 11) critically examined the basic assumptions upon which the research problem was based. "If we uncritically accept the current Youth Service position as relates to youth work generally in the inner city and specifically to youth work with black young people, we will be engaging in an Establishment research and development task which ultimately tries to justify itself solely in terms of fear: fear of the conflict which in every way is indicative of the intense personal conflict of those young people created by the Establishment itself."

He concluded by stating that:

*It seems to me that NAYC is in an excellent position to examine what the Youth Service is currently doing up and down the country, examine the move away from that by young blacks and black youth and community workers, examine the alternative forms of provision for young people, why the pioneering groups choose that particular approach, how their projects are funded, what support they draw from the rest of the community, the extent to which the Youth Service could be attempting to address the needs of the same clients in similar ways, and so on. This to me would make for a more useful and realistic project, and would, I am convinced, give all those who still need it enough ammunition to lay the Hunt report to rest, peacefully, forever. (John 1981, p. 12)*

Following the submission of John's report, the project steering committee agreed that the rationale as contained in the original proposal for an action research programme was incomplete. As well as commenting on the inadequacy of training for youth workers, John's 1974 progress report to the Department of Education and Science concluded that:

*Because we work in four regions which cover the country more or less we are able to make certain generalisations and prognoses regarding national trends in multi-racial youth work, the educational achievement of young West Indians, the status of young black people within the society and the changes necessary within the Youth Service, community and education in order to prevent the human wastage which we are made aware of in virtually every area. (John 1981, p. 14)*

After discussions with the DES, the recommendations in this report led eventually to the appointment of a member of staff to the Youth and Race in the Inner City project, which started in 1976. In terms of the multiracial project, John noted that during the first year, the research team was confronted with the "anger and frustration" of black people who objected to being the subject of research and surveys over which they had no control. In his discussions on the Youth Service and young black people he further argued that:

*During the pre- and post-Hunt era, the Youth Service sought benignly to promote integration and good relations between young blacks and whites. As it matured into a mass of confusion, the Youth Service simultaneously subscribed to and was guided by the racist ideology which accompanied its growth. To begin with it was the culture of the blacks that was at fault. It needed to be understood, tolerated, explained and apologised for. Like other social institutions it has responded to the main policy formulations and definitions regarding black people. It is precisely in doing so that it fails to offer much that is meaningful to young blacks. (John 1981, p. 35)*

In addition to the publication of John's (1981) report *In the service of black youth*, the 1980s was also a period of social unrest. According to Sallah and Howson (2007, p. 11): "Many of the major cities were brought to a standstill as the fires burned in places like Brixton, St Paul's, Lozells/Handsworth, Toxteth, Moss Side and Leicester. Up until this period young black people more or less accepted the pathological view of themselves that was predominant within the Youth Service and the wider society."

Although these disturbances were dismissed by the government as mere criminal acts, Lord Scarman (1981) who led the inquiry into the riots stated that it "was a protest against society by people, deeply frustrated and deprived, who saw in a violent attack upon the forces of law and order their one opportunity of compelling



public attention to their grievances." One of the most significant findings of the Scarman Report was the disengagement of young black people and the discriminatory practices against them by the police force. Sallah and Howson (2007, p. 30) further argued that that the "1981 uprising shattered the mirage of assimilation and ushered in multiculturalism". However, as pointed out earlier, multiculturalism was often seen as a tokenistic gesture, unlike anti-racism which emphasised policy and political changes.

However, the most pivotal and crucial time came in 1982, through the Thompson Report (1982, p. 132) which recognised the principles of "responding to the needs of young people regardless of philosophical ideals". It replaced the "outdated" Hunt Report. Although Gus John has pointed out that black youth clubs/projects are "merely a more efficient means of transmitting the hegemonic culture", Vipin Chauhan (1989, p. 25) suggests Britain's failure to respond to the needs of black youth results from its failure to recognise that Britain today is a multiracial country and that "black people are here to stay".

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*David Hansen,  
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## **A tale of two histories: a brief look at youth work in the United States**

### **→ Introduction**

In tracing the history of “youth work” in the United States, one encounters two tales. The first tale chronicles the unfolding of the field of social work, which emanated from the social welfare and reform movement and establishment of “settlement houses” serving urban poor, immigrant families and youth (Trainin-Blank 1998; Trattner 1994). Presently, social work is a professionalised occupation funded by government requiring formal education; social workers continue to address basic needs of the poor and of immigrants, such as access to suitable housing and medical care, but their function as youth worker has diminished over time.

The other tale is of the rise of a disparate patchwork of non-governmental organisations, referred to as “youth programmes”, which focus solely on serving youth. Over time, youth programmes assumed responsibility for many of the activities and services once the purview of settlement houses, such as after-school youth clubs, recreation activities, sports, and arts programmes. Today, youth programmes in many ways defy a unified focus beyond the youth they serve: they serve youth across the spectrum of social class, race and

ethnicity, from urban to rural to suburban settings, with programmes located in schools and in neighbourhood buildings. Whereas social work has become a professional occupation, “youth work”, the term most applicable to the “work” of staff in youth programmes, has remained nebulous as a professionalised occupation in the United States, although there are efforts to move youth work to this status.

This chapter provides a brief history of youth work in the United States with an eye toward understanding the social, economic and political forces that have led to its present-day functioning. Admittedly, space devoted to the social work tradition will be less than for youth programmes for two reasons. First, youth programmes are the authors’ research focus. Second, youth programmes have become the primary institution through which extensive youth work occurs. As the history of youth work in the United States is unfolded, recurrent themes and challenges to youth work will emerge.

### → From settlement houses to social work

During the first half of the 19th century, the United States experienced unprecedented economic and population growth. Industrialisation led to job expansion, which in turn lured many to urban communities in search of work and the promise of increased wages (Trattner 1994). With real wages increasing and relative economic stability, America experienced the rise of the middle class (Ehrenreich 1985); deeply ingrained was a belief in the “American dream” of hard work leading to upward economic and social mobility (Trainin-Blank 1998).

Between 1825 and 1850, the United States saw the first of two waves of Euro-immigrants, as well as Chinese and Mexican immigrants in the south and west, who gravitated to urban communities. Cities were not prepared for the large influx in population, and city services (for example, sanitation) were quickly overwhelmed (Ehrenreich 1985). Though industrialisation created many jobs, the overwhelming numbers of those looking for work created competition for jobs, which began to push youth out of the labour force as adults were hired instead of youth. Combined with overcrowding and failing city services, urban communities saw large numbers of youth roaming the streets unsupervised as parents worked long hours (some parents resorted to locking the door to their apartment so their children had to fend for themselves during working hours).

Faced with overpopulation, squalid living conditions, and unsupervised, unemployed and primarily immigrant youth, a solution was needed. Two solutions emerged. First, there was a movement to create free, public, non-sectarian schools through which Christian morality and democratic patriotism could be instilled in youth (Katz 1976). By 1890, and with growing public support, most states passed compulsory schooling laws, which led to the rise of “common schools”. Although compulsory schooling laws were passed, enforcement was not feasible because of a lack of infrastructure. Even so, there was a high rate of voluntary attendance. Eventually, public will and reform led to the administrative bureaucracy needed to enforce the compulsory schooling laws, and, along with funding for schools tied to student attendance, youth were “off the streets”, at least for a portion of the day (Katz 1976).

The second solution emerged from the middle class; women and religious ministers were particularly instrumental in establishing “settlement houses” (Trattner 1994). Guided by their deeply ingrained middle-class and religious

philosophies, volunteer workers chose to live in settlement houses located in immigrant neighbourhoods ravaged by poverty. The first settlement house was established in 1886 (the Neighborhood Guild in New York City), and by 1918, there were over 400 such houses across the country (Mintz 2004; Trainin-Blank 1998; Trattner 1994). “Settlement houses were characterized not by a set of services but by an approach: that initiative to correct social ills should come from indigenous neighborhood leaders or organisations. Settlement workers were not dispensing charity; they were working toward the general welfare” (Trainin-Blank 1998, p. 1). Armed with this approach, settlement houses offered a wide array of services depending on the particular needs of the community. For youth, activities varied: education, recreation, vocational training, life-skill training, organised sports, and arts. The settlement worker was also an advocate for social reform and welfare at all levels of government. Because of the enforcement of compulsory school laws, services for youth would eventually become relegated to non-school hours.

Social work in the United States traces its roots to settlement houses. Gradually, settlement work became a formalised occupation with specific educational requirements; today, the social worker, funded through various government agencies, continues to focus on serving disenfranchised families (for example, poor, immigrant), and provides a vital link to health care and other human services. Though social workers continue to advocate for and interact with youth, heavy case loads (that is, number of “clients” for whom they are responsible), government regulations and record keeping, and a focus on health care and other human services minimise the extent to which social workers act as youth workers. As we will see next, workers in youth programmes have come to assume the role of a youth worker, but their identity as such has been ambiguous over time as they struggle to legitimise and define their field – a struggle that continues today.

## → The rise of youth programmes and the de facto youth worker

### Early forerunners of youth work

In the early years following the Revolutionary War (1780 to early 1800s), there was optimism and a strong sense of civic responsibility to forge a new nation. Set within this atmosphere, an early forerunner of youth work emerged, which we trace to the growth of voluntary societies and associations created by the recently established middle-class and working-class young men instilled with notions of upward mobility (Mintz 2004). These “clubs” included a wide range of ages from boys as young as 10 to young men in their twenties. Activities of the clubs varied based on their emergent interests, including literary societies, sports teams, art clubs and political groups. Young men of the middle class also established anti-slavery associations, which signalled growing discontent among youth, mainly in the north, with slavery. In the wake of the Revolutionary War in which some gained freedom from slavery, young African-American men also formed their own organisations. For example, George T. Downing established a literary society (circa 1837) in New York at the age of 14 (Mintz 2004). Among other things, the nature of these self-initiated clubs provided youth with means to engage in societal issues and shape the fabric of emerging US society, something that would be eroded over time. This brief period of US history is one of the few where there was a relative absence of age-segregation; younger and older youth freely interacted in these clubs and boys as young as 14 joined political organisations. Major changes were about to occur both with the rapid expansion of an urban, immigrant population and the advent of the Civil War.

### **Creating space for youth work: out-of-school time**

Between 1854 and 1883, there was a second wave of European immigration (and some 288 000 Chinese immigrants) spurred by famine or political unrest (Mintz 2004). Cities already faced with overcrowding and strained services struggled to keep up. In addition, many immigrant families and children moved to mining towns, where both worked in hazardous conditions, or they headed west to settle new territories and farm. While the middle class had created a childhood relatively free of paid labour, working-class families relied on their children's labour to help the family economy; child labourers faced constant exploitation. Labour and reform movements challenged the conditions of child labour, which led to state-specific labour laws (for example, Massachusetts' State Labour Law, 1836) and eventually to federal regulation of child labour in the Fair Labour Act of 1938. A major concern of the reform movement was that children who worked long hours had no time for school, recreation, or other healthy pursuits, which had become established middle-class values. Thus, it is not surprising that, coinciding with labour reform efforts, there was the rise of compulsory education.

Undeniably, compulsory education changed the fabric of childhood by extending a period in which children were free from labour and adult responsibilities. Middle-class ideals steeped in the American Dream also shaped the public's conceptions about childhood itself. Considered by most as the "Progressive Era", the mid- to late-1800s and well into the 1900s saw the rise of beliefs that childhood (at least until the age of 16) should be filled with education, free from the hazards of an adult world, especially adult employment conditions (Mintz 2004). To illustrate, between 1870 and 1915 in the United States, the number of children in school grew from 7 million to 20 million; expenditure on education increased from US\$63 million to US\$605 million (Katz 1976; Mintz 2004). With the rise of education reformers, most notably John Dewey (1859-1952), developmentally appropriate education, rooted in children's experiences, became a prevailing view of the purpose of childhood.

Amidst labour and educational reform movements, dissension between northern and southern states over slavery grew until it erupted in civil war (1861-65). The moral and religious underpinnings of reform movements were integrally part of the growing condemnation of slavery. The devastation of families from the war created many orphans and awakened public awareness of the plight of children, who needed "protection" from the corrupting forces of their environment – overcrowded, poor urban neighbourhoods. The net effect of the war was to increase the number of youth and the visibility of youth on urban streets, which became a focus of reform movements.

As greater numbers of immigrant and orphaned youth began to attend school for a portion of the day because of compulsory education, a new space was being created: out-of-school time. There emerged small, location-specific youth programmes, some located in settlements or in churches or storefronts. Although youth programmes were certainly influenced by the work in settlement houses, it would be inaccurate to trace their start to settlement houses. The earliest youth programme, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), was founded in the United States in 1851, which is considerably earlier than establishment of the first settlement house in 1886. Captain Thomas Valentine Sullivan, an American seaman and missionary of Boston, Massachusetts, and founder of the American YMCA, was an early promoter of reforms for young men with a focus on programmes to support mental, physical, social and religious development. The YMCA in the United States was influenced by the London YMCA that regarded the association as an opportunity to provide a "home away from home" for young sailors on shore leave (Mintz 2004). As was the case for settlement

workers, the YMCAs were run almost entirely by volunteers. Due to changes in the political and physical location of ethnic populations, the Boston YMCA began to establish other divisions to satisfy the needs of local neighbourhoods. Sponsorship of this youth programme, like others to follow, came from individual donations as well as churches but not from the government. Youth programmes gradually came to be seen as places where youth could “experience” their world in a safe and healthy manner and avoid dangers of excessive, unsupervised free time.

### **Rise of youth work philosophy but not method**

This pattern of small, diffuse youth programmes with diverse sponsorship would continue into the mid-20th century. Early in 1906, 53 independent boys’ clubs came together in Boston to form a national organisation, the Federated Boys’ Clubs. The Girl Scout programme, which developed from the concerns of the progressive movement in the United States, sought to promote the social welfare of young women and was formed as a counterpart to the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The foundations of 4-H also began around the start of the 20th century. In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act and created the Co-operative Extension System at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); among other responsibilities, the USDA had diverse boys’ and girls’ clubs that focused on agriculture, home economics, and other agriculture-related subjects. In the same year (1914), the national 4-H organisation was formed, and by 1924, the USDA and the 4-H clubs became organised as the National 4-H. While some youth programmes served poor and racial/ethnic minority youth, programmes as a whole served the widest possible range of youth. This is not to imply, however, that youth programmes equally served poor minority youth; in fact, this was generally not the case for marginalised African-American youth.

Perhaps because of a lack of government funding, the purposes of youth programmes remained diverse, determined by the founders of the programmes. As might be anticipated, the purpose of youth programmes differed depending on the group of youth served. Programmes serving urban poor and working-class immigrant youth tended to focus on providing “organised” activities as a way to instil American values (for example, acculturation; Riess 1989; Kleiber and Powell 2005). Programmes serving rural youth, such as 4-H, emphasised agricultural experiences as a way to familiarise youth with agricultural traditions. Boys’ clubs serving urban youth provided safe spaces and opportunities of social development and physical activities. Boy Scouts (1910) purpose was to teach boys patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred values and Girl Scouts aimed to build self-esteem and to teach values such as honesty, fairness, courage, compassion, character, sisterhood, confidence, and citizenship; both of these programmes primarily served working- and middle-class youth. Other programmes, typically location-specific and not organised at a national level, emerged during this time as well, but their histories are difficult to coalesce because of inadequate records. Although youth programmes had diverse purposes, they all aimed to fulfil a perceived need of youth, often with activities to make “valuable” use of unsupervised time out of school. Although many of these youth programmes had a guiding philosophy around providing youth with different, enriching experiences while keeping them safe, there appears to be no guiding methodology or pedagogy that could summarise the youth work across programmes.

### **“Latchkey” youth**

Prior to the two world wars, there were additional changes in education and employment that further solidified the need for youth programmes to fill the



out-of-school time. Compulsory high school education laws were passed extending mandatory education for youth through grade 12 (approximately age 17 or 18). To illustrate the impact of this law, during the first 30 years of the 19th century, a new high school opened everyday in the United States (Mintz 2004). In addition, strict new child labour laws went into effect (1938) successfully excluding adolescents from adult occupations and severely limiting the places and times they could work (Grossman 1978). These changes were the final impetus in creating a (perceived) need for spaces and activities for youth when not in school. Existing youth programmes (for example, Boy Scouts) continued to expand and new programmes continued to emerge until the Second World War, which resulted in a temporary hold on expansion.

The Second World War left an indelible mark on American conceptions of childhood and adolescence. During the war, adolescents were a valuable source of labour and support for families (exceptions to labour law were made), which increased their capital and status but also heightened fears that youth were spending too much time engaged in adult-like activities. In response to labour needs associated with the war, mothers entered the paid labour force, many for the first time, creating childcare challenges. Over time, fears of unsupervised youth received public attention: newspapers coined the term “latchkey children” to describe youth who had to fend for themselves after school, while mothers worked, and were given keys to the house or apartment (Katz 1976; Mintz 2004). In response, the federal government funded “extended-school” programmes in order to provide after-school care for some 100 000 to 300 000 children. Recreation centres for adolescents also emerged, often sponsored by businesses (for example, the Coca-Cola Company) interested in developing a new “teen” market (see Mintz 2004, for a more complete history of this period). These centres differed from youth programmes, which still operated, in that they had less adult-imposed structure, which the public eventually viewed as a problem needing to be addressed. It is difficult to determine the extent that youth work was occurring in these recreation centres, but we think they represent an important piece of US history that is, at least loosely, relevant to youth work.

### **Post-war recovery**

Immediately following the Second World War, there was an intense desire among Americans to return to normalcy. The birth rate rose dramatically giving rise to the baby boomer generation, a term applied to the population of babies born between 1945 and 1965. The largely white urban middle-class began to relocate to the suburbs in an effort to focus on raising and spending more time with their children and providing a relatively protected, carefree childhood; suburbs were modelled after Levittown, which was a planned community consisting of 17 000 single-family homes (Mintz 2004). High schools also experienced substantial changes during this period. An influential report by James Conant (1959) made forceful recommendations that high schools should be “comprehensive”, meaning they should provide a breadth of educational and social experiences. It also recommended merging small high schools, those under 100, into larger schools in order to improve the number of available courses and as a way to integrate a diverse society. Following these recommendations, many high schools increased in size, some upwards of 3 000 students. The extent to which the number and types of youth programmes increased at this time is difficult to ascertain, mainly due to a lack of systematic record keeping, which reflects the idiosyncratic nature in the way youth programmes were started. However, there is evidence for such increases. For example, the number of boys’ clubs increased from 209 in 1942 to 550 in 1959. Schools also added “extra-curricular” activities, such as sports, various clubs, and

arts, to provide both enriching experiences but also adult supervision. It is again difficult to determine a common youth work method or pedagogy among the vast array of youth programmes at this point in history.

Social unrest also began to flourish during this period. With the white middle class increasingly removed from urban neighbourhoods, cities experienced a rise in poverty and gang violence among immigrant, southern migrants and racial minority populations. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s succeeded in overturning long-standing segregation laws. It also put a national spotlight on racial, ethnic and gender inequalities in the United States; particularly important was a heightened awareness of the poverty and plight of low-income, African-American youth who were viewed as disengaged from society, hard to reach, alienated and often “delinquent” (a term particularly applied to adolescents). In 1964, the federal government announced “War on Poverty” aimed at reducing persistent poverty and providing educational and job opportunities for the cities’ disenfranchised. As part of the War on Poverty, federal dollars were committed, mainly to schools, but also to out-of-school organisations serving early childhood, such as the Headstart programme, although the proportion of funds was small. Youth programmes began to change their approach to working with socially excluded, alienated youth (that is, alienated from mainstream America): they began offering a variety of activities aimed at “educational enrichment” (Halpern 2002) in addition to traditional recreation, arts, activities, etc. It should be noted too that youth programmes for working- and middle-class youth continued to flourish, and, as some have suggested, focused on opportunity enhancement, which distinguished them from their lower-income programme counterparts (Kleiber and Powell 2005; Medrich et al. 1982). With federal funding, albeit limited, beginning to filter to youth programmes, especially for those focused on early childhood, the “work” in youth programmes began to be known as “youth work” (Halpern 2002).

### **Legitimising youth work**

By the beginning of 1980, there was a resurgence of maternal employment spurred in part by the need for part-time workers during and after school hours. Public concern once again focused on unsupervised “latchkey” youth, especially adolescents who were considered “at risk” for a host of problem behaviours. The rallying cry for this renewed worry over unsupervised youth were reports about the “3 to 6 p.m.” hours – the after-school hours – as the most dangerous times for delinquency, such as alcohol and drug experimentation (Afterschool Alliance 2004). Awareness also grew at this time that youth programmes were a solution to the problem of the delinquency during the after-school hours (Halpern 2002). With these mounting pressures, youth work experienced a revival of sorts as new, typically local, youth programmes sprung up to keep youth safe from harm. This theme of providing youth with a safe place (namely, a place to reduce delinquency) was not new but its emphasis placed out-of-school care at the forefront of the solution.

As the 1990s emerged, there were clear signs of a change in the labour market: technology jobs and high-paying jobs experienced growth, but there was also a steady decline in high-paying manufacturing jobs. The net effect of these changes was to create a new demand on schools and out-of-school institutions to help prepare youth for the new “21st century job skills.” In 1991, an influential government report emerged called the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). SCANS highlighted the personal skills and education youth entering the full-time labour market would need in the 21st century; it focused on what employers considered key labour market skills needed of

employees (US Department of Labor 1991). This influential report heightened awareness of a “softer” set of skills adult occupations demanded, in addition to basic academic skills. The report also created the general sense that schools were failing to teach these skills. For youth programmes, the report provided a language youth workers needed to define what they had been intuitively doing all along: providing youth opportunities to gain essential, non-academic skills required for “success” in America.

By the mid to late 1990s, the methods and philosophy of youth work began to solidify around the theme of “youth development”, which helped consolidate and distinguish the field of youth work from other fields that had dominated youth work to this point (for example, medical or intervention approaches). Instead of working with youth from a deficit model, youth work considered that the best way to prevent problems was to focus on factors that contribute to healthy development. Over time, youth programmes also began to receive greater notoriety due to rapidly burgeoning research funding and studies touting the benefits of participation in youth programmes. Despite awareness and support for youth programmes, youth workers in these programmes consisted of a few paid staff with many volunteers; volunteers ranged in age from college students to retirees.

In the early 2000s, fear over American youth not being competitive in an increasingly globalised labour market emerged due to a perception of declining academic standards. Partly in response to this fear, the federal government created the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2005) in which federal funding for schools became tied to students’ scores on standardised achievement tests. Schools quickly became bogged down in meeting these new rigid standards. Schools were looking for any “edge” they could find to help increase academic achievement. By this time, the research evidence on the benefits of participation in youth programmes was widely spread, aided by the publication of several influential publications (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002). For example, Berliner reported that participation in youth programmes could have a positive impact on low-income youth’s academic achievement. Schools began to look favourably on the youth programmes seeing them as the “edge” they needed. The mounting pressure on schools, along with the publicised value of youth programmes, focused attention on the academic value of programmes. This pressure still exists today and some have expressed concerns over the purpose and pedagogy of youth work in the youth programme setting being “hijacked” in service of educational objectives (Hansen 2008).

### → The present and future of youth work

By the mid-2000s, national attention on youth programmes brought a new set of pressures on youth workers. First, there was mounting pressure to increase the “quality” of youth programmes based on the belief that higher quality youth programmes (really higher quality youth work) lead to better developmental opportunities and outcomes for youth; a recent special issue of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* focused solely on the issue of youth programme “quality” (Durlak et al. 2010). New observational measures of programme quality also emerged along with enthusiasm for the idea that if you increase quality you necessarily increase the developmental benefits to youth in the programme (Yohalem and Wilson-Ahlstrom 2010; Durlak and Weissberg, 2007). What has emerged from the focus on quality, particularly from the rise of observational measures, is interest in the pedagogy of youth work. For many youth workers, asking, “How should I work with youth?” is a new experience; the default

approach for many years has been, “If we provide the activities they will learn.” This relatively new trend is at the same time promising and dangerous: promising because it can lead youth work to articulate clear pedagogical approaches that are best suited to youth, dangerous because youth work can succumb to the same forces that have led education to its standardised testing neurosis (for example, evaluate and make high stakes decisions about teachers based on students’ test scores). Second, there have been ongoing efforts to solidify the youth work field. There have been sustained efforts to create out-of-school youth worker networks; the purpose of these networks, funded by private foundations, such as the Mott Foundation, is to connect partners and build capacity for youth programmes. Presently, there are over 40 states with formal “after-school networks”. There is also an organisation the purpose of which is specifically to promote youth work as a professional occupation: the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition.

By way of final remarks, the history of youth work in the United States suggests a field that has repeatedly adapted and responded to social, economic and cultural changes. Unlike its social work “cousin”, youth work has thus far avoided professionalisation with its benefits (for example, steady funding) and drawbacks (for example, restrictive regulations). The steady stream of national attention, much of it coming from research findings, has provided new opportunities for youth work to move towards professionalisation. Are these trends positive? Although a cliché – time will tell.

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*Herman Balthazar*

## **Youth policy: a historical essay**

### **→ Eyewitness history**

There are many still bent on ignoring the fact that a future without a past is like groping inside a blind alley. That the planning of future projects requires concrete knowledge of what happened in the past is seldom a self-evident or inherent point of attention. This is why the present 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy may be considered a rather exceptional initiative. The subtitle of the conference, "Relevance for youth work policy today", emphatically demonstrates that historical knowledge of, and research in, youth work and youth policy represents a trump card in one's attempts to succeed in tomorrow's competitions. It goes without saying that I personally am delighted with this attitude. Personally because I, as Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Ghent, have on several occasions initiated and encouraged studies on youth movements, in the conviction that it pertains to an important field of research which, in essence, fits into the major issues about the social evolution in Europe from the middle of the 19th century up to the present day. And the areas of research in the field of contemporary history, certainly those that relate to the post-Second World War era, are inextricably tied to what my German colleagues

in *Zeitgeschichte* have so appropriately named “*ein geschehende Geschichte*”, that is to say, a history for which queries, methodology, study, and synthesis flow and continue from yesterday into tomorrow.

Moreover, secondly and even more on a personal level, I am delighted since from age 7 to 21 I was actively involved in the Boy Scouts movement, a time of which I retain nothing but the fondest of recollections and which I cherish as an inspiration that has assisted me on the road towards social integration and social accountability.

And, thirdly, I feel personally delighted since today, as a father and now also a grandfather, I have witnessed, and am witnessing, the involvement of two sons and two grandchildren in this Scouts movement.

The historian that I am is therefore also a participant. During the 1970s, Arthur Schlesinger Jr, the reputed American historian – amongst his many other achievements also the author of a fine biography of J. F. Kennedy – in “The historian as participant” composed a wonderful apology of the “eyewitness history”, for example, “the history written by persons who themselves took part in the events they record”. Schlesinger was well aware that the guild of professional historians was very sceptical of, and opposed to, the revival of such “eyewitness history” accounts, often supported by “oral history”, that is to say, history based on word of mouth transmissions. Many of the counter-arguments do indeed make good sense, but Schlesinger also lucidly demonstrated that “eyewitness historians” harking back to Thucydides writing about the Peloponnesian Wars in the 5th century BC or Flavius Josephus recounting the events of the Judaic-Roman War during the 1st century AD are well capable of separating themselves from the writers of “memoirs” and journalists. It is always a matter of emphasising first and foremost the rules of the historical analysis. These are the rules, in my opinion, we can use to our advantage in a historical analysis of youth movements, youth work, youth policy, and, in general, the place of youth movements with its effects across the entire social field.

That this 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy takes place in Flanders and has been organised by the Flemish partners should not surprise anybody. From the last quarter of the 19th century until this day, we cannot point to one country where youth movements have exerted such a social impact at such an early stage and with such profound effect.

During the period of their genesis and into the *interbellum*, multiple foreign influences contributed to establishing the form and content of the youth movements (especially from England, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria), but their growth and diversity is marked primarily by the particular characteristics of Belgian, and more specifically, Flemish-Belgian history. Foreign influences and cross-pollination, on the one hand, and association with the national historical elements, on the other, are conducive towards a comparative approach. In this process I am starting from the Flemish-Belgian context. On the European plane, this is a context that remains all too unknown, yet is very relevant. Not for nothing has Tony Judt devoted a major, albeit somewhat skewed, chapter to it in his masterly work “Reappraisals: reflections on the forgotten twentieth century” (2008).

### → Three social evolutions

We may note striking concordances during the time period wherein we witness the emergence of the modern youth movement phenomenon. Between 1878 and 1890, we note the rise of Catholic, liberal, socialist, and radical Flemish youth groups.

Three social evolutions become intertwined within one another in this process:

1. A high point in the conflict between the liberals and the Catholics, reaching its zenith in the so-called “school controversy”. First, there was a liberal majority, at the helm between 1878 and 1883. The liberals did everything in their power to expand the official public education system and to ensure for it the top rank within the educational landscape. The Catholic counter-offensive mustered all of its resources to derail this liberal plan, the militant organising of the targeted public, the youths, being one of these. The Catholic Party regained political ascendancy in 1883 and remained in uninterrupted power until 1914. The liberals then regrouped in a fiercer and more aggressive opposition front. Liberal youth organisations were part of this. Belgium came into being in 1830 out of a remarkable and temporary coalition between a liberal and a Catholic opposition to the reign of King William I in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. For the Catholics, freedom of education was an essential demand that contained the prospect of acquiring a monopoly for Catholic free education. It did turn into one of the most virulent political battle themes about the role of the church and the state. The coalition of liberal-Catholic opposition that had forged the creation of Belgium made room for an unforgiving antagonism between the clerics and anti-clerics. It overshadowed and overpowered Belgian politics until about 1960; its aftermath is still with us today.
2. Both a high point and a turn in the social question is the concern about the living conditions of, and the social control over, the ever-increasing workers population in the cities. The formation of the Belgian Workers Party (*Belgische Werkliedenpartij*) in 1885 presages the formation of a third and autonomous political power against the two civil antagonists, the liberals and the Catholics. Also, this new socialist power built up a multi-varied network, amongst which an active youth movement. The first manifestation was the formation of groups in reaction to the “drawing lots system”, the so-called “*Lotelingskringen*”, a youth movement directed against the feared annual lottery where one was drawn by lot for – or exempted from – joining the military for an extended service term and whereby the sons of the wealthy classes could buy their way out.
3. The Flemish movement was in the process of expanding from a mere *petit bourgeois* language movement into a political movement with widespread implications, one that demanded language rights on all social planes. The enactment and promulgation of a new series of language laws was its initial outcome. Especially, the Law of 1883, which partially turned official secondary education into a vehicle for Dutch-language instruction, gave rise to a new type of youth action directed against the inadequate or reluctant enforcement of the law. As of 1885, the secondary school institutions created associations meant to instil “an ever-growing Flemish sentiment into the hearts and minds of the young”. It was a youth movement that kept step with the freethinking liberal objectives and aspirations. Much more drastic and pronounced was the return to the radical Flemish-oriented sentiment, the so-called *flamingantism*, in some of the Catholic colleges and at the Catholic University of Leuven where, following the example of the German *Burschenschaften*, the student body was summoned to play a pioneering role in a new political battle. Almost all symbols and many songs that even today are meant to emphasise the force of this Flemish nationalism found their origin during the last quarter of the 19th century. But in their origin, these symbols were common currency within all of the political families.

### → The vertigo years

We note, as such, striking concordances originating during the last quarter of the 19th century and receiving their full form during the years 1900-14. Philip Blom



(2008) called this period “the vertigo years” in a revealing work about the dizzying changes in Europe even prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Blom demonstrates in his book that, probably, the most important intellectual, cultural, scientific and emotional normative changes that established the Europe of the 20th century took place in the course of those years before 1914.

When I gave my students a first introduction to contemporary history, I always asked them to read a chapter in G. Barraclough’s *An introduction to contemporary history*. He situates, like Philip Blom does, within the decade prior to 1914 the most significant changes and progressions in European and global history.

Once again, I want to point out the paradoxical concordances. The modern youth movement was formed in precisely this period and was primarily sustained and steered by a dual force: on the one hand, there was the idolisation of, and the patriotic support for, the nation state; and, on the other, there was the mobilisation of youth head-on versus opposing camps with their own ideological-philosophical messages.

Barraclough demonstrated that these two forces were insufficiently conscious of the global processes of change in the transition period from the 19th to the 20th century. I am isolating three that in the course of the 20th and the current 21st century have acquired ever-greater influence and were destined to seriously affect the Eurocentrism of our way of thinking and philosophy:

1. Colonialism experienced its greatest expansion. A few European nations, Belgium amongst them, lorded it over the major part of the world. This European overlordship appeared a paternal, racist, and unassailable evident fact. Belgian schoolchildren proudly sang about new pathways to be opened for mankind. Consider this one revealing sentence in the patriotic song *Naar Wijd en Zijd* (towards the future): ‘Is uw bodem hier klein, ginds toch wacht u een land, als een wereld zo groot waar uw vlag staat gepland’ (Though your own country be small, over there awaits a land, a boundless world where your standard proudly flies). “Over there” refers to the Belgian Congo, the colony that, totally unprepared for it, received its independence in 1960 and that, today, in 2010, caught fast in the shackles of the most abominable conditions, is “celebrating” the 50th anniversary of its independence. For many decades, far too long, in fact, one underestimated the signs of a looming anti-colonial and anti-European revolution. The mental reassessment only became marked during the late 1950s, forced to the fore by the imperative perspective of the inevitable decolonisation and the penetration of novel ideas about the Third World – a novel concept in the polarised East-West contrasts and oppositions – and also of development aid as a new ethical contract for the former European coloniser. I shall return to this later, but it is important for us to stress that the youth movements of nearly all categories marched in the forefront of this mental reversal.
2. A second global process of change was the already present, but within Europe still a well nigh unnoticed, shifting of the global power centres. From the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 20th century, world politics had been retracting into a military and diplomatic game of European power balancing. Already before 1914, it had become clear that new players were entering the field of world politics. From the time of the Spanish-American War of 1898 to the entry of the United States of America into the First World War in April 1917, and into the Second World War in December 1941, the United States were assuming an ever-growing prominent role as world leaders. Japan, which in 1894-95 engaged in war with China and in 1904-05 with Russia, already at that time made it evident that also in the “Far East” (a geographical term of Eurocentrism) new and

powerful players were entering the arena of world politics. The end of the Second World War almost immediately led to new concentrations and realignments in world politics. It turned into the period of the cold war with a divided Europe now rendered much more impotent, ranged into a western and an eastern camp. The break-up of the strict cold war concentrations and realignments became evident as of the early 1960s. Again, we can point out that the youth movements were amongst the earliest parties engaged in this phenomenon, for instance, by their deeper involvement in a new type of peace movement, which assumed a rather massive character during the so-called “anti-nuclear marches”. And is there actually anybody that can estimate the number of posters of Che Guevara that during the 1960s were pinned up inside the rooms of young people?

3. A third global process of change pertained to – and the process is still ongoing – the demographic growth and, within this growth period, the “dwarfing” of Europe. We still find ourselves situated within the second and overwhelming population growth period since the coming of humans on this planet. This second explosion started in the 18th century and during one and a half centuries its epicentre was situated in Europe. Between 1800 and 1900, Europe’s share in the world population rose from circa 21% to circa 26%. It ran parallel to the great Industrial Revolution, with accelerated urbanisation and massive waves of emigration, especially to North America. A reversal occurred as of 1900: while global population growth accelerates, the European share is shrinking, since it is in Europe that we find a paradigm of a neo-Malthusian trend. Europe demonstrates a conscious anti-conception behaviour pattern which becomes manifest in ever-declining family units. The same anti-conception behaviour pattern is expanding across the entire “developed” world and, somewhat later, also in newly emerging nations such as China. In 1950, of the 2.5 billion population some 800 million inhabited the “wealthy”, and 1 700 million the “poor” world: a ratio of 1 to 2. This ratio is currently less than 1 to 4 for a world population that counts already more than 7 billion people. In addition to the “dwarfing” of Europe, we currently count the ageing factor: in Belgium, we are approaching a quarter of the population that is older than 60 years of age. And, finally, there is the phenomenon of migration. Between 1840 and 1920, Europe was beset by emigration; since 1960, there has been multiple immigration. This third, demographic process of change is bound to become an ever-stronger societal factor in our 21st century. Versus this process of change, the youth movement, in contrast to the already mentioned processes, has not been able to formulate a forceful and uniform answer. Let us keep that clearly in mind, but, first, we shall return to the main lines of this historical development.

### → The heydays of the youth movement

Throughout the whole of Belgium, and especially in the Flemish sector of the country, youth movements were between 1890 and 1960 distinguished by a number of common characteristics. Amongst these, the three most important are: education and work methods; belonging to a religious-philosophical political platform, and, finally, the relatively high participation rate.

In other sessions at this conference, men with greater expertise in the subject have spoken about the participation problem. I shall leave that subject aside, except to point out that a historical analysis of the participation rates also needs to be ever mindful of at least two parameters: the first pertains to the ratio between organised and unorganised youth; the second pertains to the socio-economic and socio-cultural pyramid, from the most gifted to the most underprivileged youths. What is this pyramid’s relationship to the participation rate?

In general, one may suggest that the onset of the youth movements ran parallel to a process of massification and social emancipation. The expectation pattern of the initiators in all camps was therefore geared towards a stronger organisational and substantive contextual involvement and usefulness, while taking into account that the youth groups to be addressed required their own pedagogical approach. This then was a completely different and novel social element that in the course of the 20th century has been adapted on more than one occasion but, essentially, has remained the same.

As a basic hypothesis, I would like to propose that the participation rate (per 1 000 youngsters) in the course of many decades has not managed to keep pace with the general socio-political massification process from the year 1890 onwards. A second hypothesis is that participation in a youth movement from an underprivileged situation offered increased possibilities, or opportunities, for social advancement.

My analysis starts from the time line 1890-1960. After 1960, we note an accumulation of new influential factors: (1) during the 1960s, the high point in the development of the social welfare state ran into criticism and the barriers of this social welfare model; (2) authorities (from national to local administrative levels) legislate, institutionalise, and professionalise ever more fields of activity, including as regards youth work; (3) as never before, secularisation is subject to sociological acceleration and a broadening trend; (4) the individual citizen secularises and readapts at a faster speed than the old customary structures, which keep on functioning but (are forced to) consider the citizen ever less as militant and ever more as consumer.

All these, and other influencing factors, exert a great impact on youth movements and youth work, and these appear to go on burgeoning ever-more strongly than before. In the cited study by Filip Coussée (2008), I read that, today, in the Flemish region there are more than 7 000 subsidised youth work initiatives at work. In these, we count the strong presence of the more traditional, uniformed youth movements. Coussée counts 2 665 Flemish youth movement groups, the large majority of which still belong to, or originated in, the Catholic block (Coussée 2008, p. 4). Let us take a close look at this growth pattern, starting from its origin.

### → Youth work along dividing lines in society

A correlation study regarding the types of youth movements and the politico-ideological blocks within the Flemish-Belgian political landscape renders a remarkable picture. As stated above, the oldest and longest-running dividing line is the one between the clerics and the anti-clerics, in the Belgian political lingo better known as the tension line between the Catholics and the liberals.

The liberal anticlerical block first arose within the heart of the liberal opinion stream. In 1846, the Liberals formed the first modern political party, quickly followed by the emergence of two streams within this liberalism: a political-conservative stream versus a social radical stream. It was within this social radical streaming that the freethinking liberalist, anticlerical movement found its strongest roots, both within and outside the liberal opinion stream. Thus, the liberal anticlerical movement also became an aspect of the socialist workers movement. Until some 30 years ago, one would find here, within this very building where this conference is taking place, a socialist library, which in the 1860s had been founded as the *De Vrijzinnige Werkmansbibliotheek Vooruit* (The Freethinkers Workers Library to the Front). The fact is that this freethinking liberalistic block was formed both within and outside the liberal movement, within and outside the workers movement.

Attention to young people was from its very inception present within this block but was, in the first place, directed towards more and better education for the people: more and better schools in the workers' districts, towards a battle for a law on compulsory education, which in Belgium found support only in 1914, very late when compared to the laws in the neighbouring European countries. Aside from this prime attention to education, a great number of initiatives towards after-school support were introduced: free availability of instructional books and dictionaries, vacation colonies, and the like.

However, in the onset of the modern youth movement, neither the liberal movement in the strict sense, nor the broader liberal movement, undertook successful and sustainable initiatives. One can draw up a list of them, but as to their forcefulness and numbers, they were no match for the Catholic powerhouse. In several publications it is suggested that the Free Masons Order would have played a active role, given that the Belgian, like the French, Free Masons formed an anticlerical bulwark. However, aside from a few partial support actions and the role of some individual free masons, there does not exist any evidence for that contention.

In the socialist movement, specific youth work very quickly found a place in the propaganda network that was developed from 1880 onwards. We already mentioned the reaction against the practice of "drawing lots", the first anti-militaristic youth associations. These expanded into a Socialist Young Guardians body organised at the national level. Ghent also set the example of working with young children by the formation of nattily uniformed *Volkskinderen* (children of the people) after the German pedagogical model.

One could quote many other socialist initiatives, yet, they never achieved a mass character. Following the First World War, it was especially Hendrik De Man who exerted great influence with his concept of ethical socialism. The young Rode Valken (red falcons) and the adolescent *Arbeidersjeugd* (workers youth) were organised after Dutch and Austrian models, laden with values and symbols. While it never managed to become a mass movement, it, nonetheless, did acquire great influence, since for the most active members it became the stepping stone to management positions in one of the branches of the socialist movement.

After the Second World War, a new start was made with these *interbellum* models. Likewise, the socialist unions and socialist medicare services more or less developed their own youth movements after more or less analogous models, but neither were of a mass character. After 1960, this traditional type of socialist movement therefore rather quickly fell into a downward spiral. Its presence today is merely marginal.

Totally different is the story on the Catholic side. At the appearance of the modern youth movement, Belgium had since 1870 known a Catholic-ultramontane dynamic that, for its forceful impact and wide projection, was a model throughout Europe. As a barrier against the dangers of godless and stateless socialism, this Catholic ultramontanism provided the stimuli for the development of a network of parochial and other workers' groups and patronages that ensured an unswerving Catholic subculture from cradle to grave. The new wave of youth movements was thus instantly incorporated into this targeted goal. It met with astonishing and deep-seated success. For instance, the Boy Scouts movement only achieved a breakthrough in Flemish Belgium after the Catholic Church accepted the Boy Scouts into its fold. Until this very day, the pluralistic-inspired Scout movement does not represent even 10% of the Scout movement that found its inception within Catholic ranks.

The identical phenomenon, albeit with greater resistance, has been noticeable in the formation of many radical Flemish youth groups. Certainly during the *interbellum* period, there arose a striking tension between the “Catholisation” of many Flemish-national youth groups and the opposing autonomy of other groups that primarily were headed into the right-wing authoritarian direction.

Both the density of the participation and the nature of the structures of the present-day youth movements in Flanders may thus be explained by the developments that took place between 1890 and 1960. When, from the 1960s onwards, new queries and needs arose concerning the activities of youth movements, responses to these new questions and needs were only possible by harking back to events that happened during that period. The old and strict identifications of the past – Catholicism, liberalism, Belgian patriotism or its Flemish-national counterpart – have for half a century assumed an ever-diminishing, almost altogether faded, role. One of the central questions that the participants face in this European conference is: What new types of identifications and role models have taken their place?

How a large and strong new type of youth movement in Europe will assume the form and presence of a new unified entity within the current welter of diversity is a question for which I, as a historian, fail to find an answer. As a citizen, I can only go as far as express my hope for its advent and pay heed to your knowledge and experiences.

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## **Youth work, an oxymoronic practice between service and association**

### **→ Youth work in the 21st century: revival or decline?**

A view from outside Europe: in the final plenary session of the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy, David Hansen argued that youth work programmes in the United States have experienced a significant revival since the last decade of the previous century. They have been revalued as the “third critical developmental setting for low- and moderate-income children” (Halpern 2002, p. 179). It is intriguing how American proponents also have difficulties to express what youth work is. They “have sometimes found it easier to define after-school programmes by what they were not – family, school, the streets – than by what they were” (Halpern 2002, p. 179).

A view from inside Europe: entitled “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering”, the European Commission adopted (in 2009) a new EU strategy for youth policy for the coming decade. The new strategy emphasises the importance of youth work and emphasises the need for strong policies aimed at further professionalisation of youth work and increasing the participation of young people. These objectives are welcomed

with open arms by most players in the youth sector. Yet, they attract some critical voices too: across the board, there is much talk about “new challenges” for youth work, especially concerning the social inclusion of young people in the context of widespread unemployment and national economic circumstances that are producing a contraction of public services, including those directed towards young people. The EU youth strategy is attentive to such concerns:

*Promoting the social and professional integration of young women and men is an essential component to reach the objectives of Europe’s Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, at the same time as promoting personal fulfilment, social cohesion and active citizenship. (Council of the European Union 2009, p. 2)*

In both Europe and the United States, therefore, we see an increasing call for the professionalisation of work in out-of-school time. At the same time it is not exactly clear what is being talked about. Is there a distinct youth work field? Is this an autonomous field? These were precisely the questions that were the reason for organising the Blankenberge workshops (the first and second seminars on the history of youth work in Europe). It is of huge importance to have a more sophisticated understanding of what youth work is all about. In many European countries the definition, position and social recognition of youth work have been under severe discussion in recent times. These debates have to be situated against a background of fundamental social, cultural and political transformations. In the reframing of our societies into a global “risk society”, youth policy agendas tend to overemphasise the smooth integration of young people into the existing social order. The evolution towards a risk society is closely connected to concerns about social cohesion and the renewal of “the social sphere in society”, more strictly regulating the relationships between individuals and between the individual and society. This can be observed in the whole of Europe. So, youth workers in all countries are rethinking their function and position in the social, cultural, economic and political integration of young people: in southern European countries where youth work is hardly a distinct, professional practice, in post-Soviet countries where state youth work has disappeared, but other work forms came to the fore, in the UK and to a lesser degree also in the Nordic countries, where one tries to bridge the gap between professionalised youth work and the voluntary youth sector, in other west European countries with a long-standing tradition of voluntary youth work where the emerging professional youth work has a rather marginal place.

Across the great diversity that characterises both regional conceptions of youth work and youth work methods, it looks as if youth work is being re-evaluated and perhaps revalued and socially recognised, but at the same time the moral and educational role of youth work is also being firmly re-emphasised. What kind of tensions does this bring? And what about the voluntary involvement of young people and the fact that youth work is inextricably bound up with leisure time, recreation and play? Is this compatible with the new framework in which youth work is reassessed and, arguably, revalued? And one of the most asked questions throughout the Ghent conference: what about the huge diversity in the youth work field? Is there a need for mainstreaming and “uniformisation”?

### → The quest for unity in diversity

One of the main aims of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, which followed the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy, was to celebrate the huge diversity in the youth work field. In the conference the question was asked many times: is there any common thread? After all, discussions covered

a plethora of “youth work” activity: independent clubs and projects, definitive associations, municipal activity, uniformed organisations, service groups, military youth bodies, political youth organisations, social inclusion initiatives, children’s charities and social enterprises. What, if anything, do they have in common? What kind of youth work do we want to be professionalised? What are the objectives underlying that intention? Is there a need for distinctive policies in relation to various youth work forms or different target groups?

The rapporteurs focused on the “nature of youth work” without bothering too much about drawing boundaries between different forms or methods of youth work. This does not mean that the different stories that are reviewed in this volume are not valuable in themselves. There is still much work to do on the history of all these different shapes of youth work (with the exception perhaps of the uniformed youth organisations), but in this concise concluding chapter we focus on “youth work as a social animal”. Drawing on Blankenberge I and II, it is our conviction that it is this social nature that needs to be revalued along with the educational role that has been in the focus of recent developments. If youth workers only take up the educational role then they will provoke counterproductive effects, as pointed out in the previous workshops: encouraging cherry picking, empowering the powerful, formalising the informal. Throughout the different workshops in this conference we were therefore looking to combine the social and educational role in youth work practice and to open up perspectives for policy and research to enable practitioners to take up a social and an educational role in what is primarily a leisure time setting. It is fascinating to see how this happened and still happens today in different youth work settings, with different young people, in different countries. We firmly believe that we have to take these observations in historical, but also current, practices into account in our actual discussions on youth work, which are often far too abstract, meaning disconnected from the lived reality of young people and youth workers.

In what follows we describe how youth workers of all kinds and types always have been searching to position themselves in relation to other fields. Youth workers of any type have always been looking for an “oxymoronic blend” between emancipation, integration and recreation, all glued together through the concept of “social education”. The conditions in which this oxymoronic blend is realised depend on the policy context. So, different youth work histories are determined by different welfare regimes that have been shaped throughout Europe.

### → A unique youth work blend, but a huge diversity of flavours

Youth work as a form of social education showed itself through many presentations in this conference as a powerful tool with the capacity to serve many masters:

- Most policy makers figuring in the presentations tended to see youth work through a lens of “socialisation”: it contributes to the individual development of children and young people, it supports the “formation of good citizens” and their integration in the existing social order. In that sense it completes the educational interventions supposed to be coming from the milieu of family and school.
- Many young people, especially those participating in youth work, seemed to experience youth work as an opportunity for “socialising”, creating possibilities for being young together. A practice that liberates young people from the grip of family and school on their lives, gives them a sense of freedom. It is this recreational and associational aspect that makes the youth work practice attractive.
- Bringing these two – seemingly contradictory – perspectives together youth workers tried to shape youth work as a “social educational” practice, supporting



the integration of young people into society, whilst at the same time strengthening their view and voice on the conditions under which this integration has to take place. This could be well defined as emancipation, which is not the same as being independent, but rather being conscious of our co-dependency and being able to choose our dependencies.

Throughout the Blankenberge workshops, we pointed to the fact that youth workers are tempted to escape the inherent tensions in social educational practice. Especially in working with challenging young people, it is tempting to de-pedagogise youth work practice and stick with the recreational aspect, often with the youth worker in a warden's or "adolescent child-minding" role. On the other hand, youth policy makers often create a framework in which it is tempting to de-socialise youth work. Then the youth worker is forced into an educator's role, focusing on the acquisition of individual civic skills and attitudes, making abstraction of the social and political significance of the youth work intervention in the lives of young people. Hämäläinen shows in his contribution how youth workers could find evidence in sociological or psychological theories about the characteristics and needs of "youth as a distinct social category" or "being young as a distinct life stage". These theories seemed to give ground under youth worker's feet, more than the oxymoronic social educational thinking.

### → Imposing solutions

The huge diversity of youth work methods that was introduced in this 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy enabled the participants to read youth work's history as a constant fight to "de-tension" youth work's nature and its inherent social educational dilemmas. It was shown several times how difficult it was (and is) for youth workers to articulate clearly what it means to "do" youth work. One of the ways out for youth workers has often been to take the youth work nature for granted and simply focus on "reaching out to young people". This focus led to distinctions being made between centre-based and street-based youth work and agency-driven labelling of young people as "hard-to-reach", "unorganised", "unclubbable" or, to use a long-discarded description, "unattached" (Morse 1965). In fact, in many countries, it was "the hunt for the non-organised youth" that was the driving force for a never-ending differentiation in the youth work field (see Nieminen in this volume). Before the Second World War, there was not much of a welfare state in European countries, so it was the voluntary sector that time and time again tried to widen its reach and to get a grip on all young people. In Belgium and other corporatist welfare states, the dominant model was the model of the (uniformed) youth organisation, as described by Baeten in this volume, and illustrated by this passage in the *American annals of social and political science* more than half a century ago:

*Through governmental measures and through their own initiative, the leaders of the youth movements are now taking responsibility towards the needs of youth in this changed world: physical health and fitness, moral and character education, vocational guidance and apprenticeship, education toward family responsibility, an adequate civic education adapted to the technical and moral needs of democracy. The youth movements are firmly decided to help solve all these problems by the influencing of the public opinion and of the government, by a co-operation with one another, by the extension of their action to the mass of youth, and by the complete and well-integrated education they aim to give to their members, alongside the family and the school, so as to enrich their personality and equip them to accomplish the great task of rebuilding their country and helping to make a better world. (Van der Bruggen and Picalausa 1946, p. 111)*

As illustrated in this quotation, the bigger questions concerning the significance of youth work had not disappeared, but the answers are disconnected from the lived realities of young people. Reaching out to young people is enough, the results will automatically follow – or so it is presumed.

It is interesting to note that Van der Bruggen and Picalausa also start off with the notion of “governmental measures”. Up to the Second World War, most national governments in Europe were not really concerned about youth work, meaning specific interventions in leisure time. The new moral panics that rose about the education of the young after the Second World War created for the first time a governmental interest in youth work. The moral panics after the Great War had provoked the same concern about the education of the young, but at that time it was the realisation of compulsory education through schooling that was high on the agenda. Guidance in leisure was left to church-based or ideological youth work organisations. This voluntary initiative was accompanied by initiatives in schools (see Vanobbergen and Simon in this volume) and, in some cases, also by municipalities (see Vermandere). And so the first half of the 20th century in most European countries was characterised by the rise of a differentiated youth work field aiming at the educationally sound organisation of young people’s leisure time. Reaching out to young people, organising the unorganised, was the central concern of youth workers. After the Second World War governments noticed that the existing youth organisations did not reach out (any more) to many young people. As argued by Timmerman and Faché in this volume, a distinct youth culture grew outside of the existing youth work field characterised by the experience of “being young together”.

### → Reconnecting youth work to youth world

Youth organisations did not succeed in the “extension of their action to the mass of youth”. As described in the contributions of Faché and Elberling in this volume, the pursuit of organising the unorganised was, in the first instance, taken up through the (re)establishment of open youth work. This was done both by (local) public services and by private associations. In many countries the welfare state took responsibility for youth work, supporting (but in many cases also neglecting) the organisations and putting services in place to serve unorganised young people. The extent to which the state took responsibility for youth work varied across Europe, depending on the welfare regime that was established.

The concept of a youth service therefore is well known in the UK (see Davies 1999; Williamson 2008). In a liberal welfare regime the state takes responsibility for a minimal basic service to support people that miss the opportunities for self-development and social integration offered by the market. Scandinavian countries follow the same logic, although in a social democratic welfare regime the support for people is in principle “unconditional”. In other countries, establishing what has been called Mediterranean or corporatist regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990), youth services were also established, but only a few of them engaged in practical youth work. The youth services in these countries remained in very close co-operation with the existing private youth organisations.

At first the concept of “service to youth” inverted the relationship between youth workers and young people. Both Spatscheck and Feixa (in this volume) illustrate how youth becomes an autonomous phase in the life stage with its own youth cultures, rites and symbols. They show how youth workers in different ways attempt to connect to the lifeworld of young people. A system-driven organisation of youth work

was exchanged for the idea of a service that was meant to start from the lifeworld of young people. In both the Albemarle report (Ministry of Education 1960) and the Fairbairn-Milson Report (Department of Education and Science 1969) on youth work in England and Wales this was heavily emphasised:

*There can be no lasting answers to the dilemmas of youth work without a radical rethinking of the position of young people in society, and of adult attitudes to the young. Those who work with young adults should no longer see themselves as providers placing young people in the position of receivers who are sometimes to be given shadow responsibilities. It is no part of our aim to achieve a comfortable integration of the youth and adult populations, nor to attempt to socialise the young so that they are reconciled with the status quo, and capitulate to its values. The aim should be to establish a dialogue between the young and the rest of society; a dialectical and not necessarily amicable process ... There can no longer be an underlying consensus about all the issues which face our society. (cited in Davies 1999, p. 126).*

### → Reconnecting youth work to society

This same move from system to lifeworld took place in other countries, in the 1960s and 1970s very often going hand in hand with an increasing professionalisation of youth work. At the same time, an appeal was made for more serious financial support from (local) government. Youth work was increasingly defined as additional education, a non-formal educational setting that completed the educational package given by the formal educational system. This “liberal” youth work concept was accepted by all stakeholders and in the Western world the model worked for a while, that is to say as long as the economy flourished. The economic and financial crises of the 1970s pushed governments to ask more strictly for a “return on investment”. Youth workers were still asked to make connection to the world of youth, but at the same they had to reconnect young people to society. In this approach, youth work is also defined as additional education but the additional character no longer lies in the different approach of a youth work as an autonomous educational setting, offering possibilities for the acquisition of experiences, skills and competences that may not or cannot be gained in school or family. Rather, youth work practice is now required to make an offer that is in line with the offer of formal schooling. The unpredictability of youth work practice is replaced by a view in which society tries to monitor, predict and control the individual development of young people.

This produces, for youth workers, complex dilemmas, as their role is defined as seeking to start from the lifeworld of young people, but striving to achieve goals increasingly defined by the system. Professionalised youth work especially – often reaching out to the so-called “hard to reach” – runs into this dilemma (see Devlin in this volume). It receives the biggest “investment”, so it has to prove a considerable “return”.

### → Youth work as social work, between public service and private association

In fact, what happened is that the scarcity of financial resources urged policy makers to re-emphasise the social role of youth work. Youth work connects young people to society. In the oscillating movement described above, we can identify the two prototypes of youth work that were described in the introductory chapter as “transit zone youth work” versus “social forum youth work”. No matter how different the welfare regimes throughout Europe may be, the tension between these two approaches has always been at the heart of youth work practice and policy.

Only very seldom, however, was it made explicit. In totalitarian regimes social forum youth work had to go underground, for the societal system was predefined and there was no need to discuss the organisation of society. There, transit zone youth work is the only legitimate practice. In more liberal regimes, social forum youth work was tolerated to a certain degree, but as shown in many histories, the impact of the social forum was not such that youth work could become a destabilising factor in society (see for instance Watt and Batsleer in this volume). Moreover, since Thatcher declared that “there is no such thing as society”, it is not clear what should be discussed in the social forum that youth work offers to young people. Indeed, it was such Thatcherite ideology that challenged, in the late 1980s, the statement of purpose for youth work that it was about “redressing” all forms of inequality. Youth work, a sequence of youth service ministers maintained during the ministerial conferences on the youth service between 1989 and 1992, was about supporting individual young people in their transition to adulthood, not even about “addressing” the contemporary experiences of young people’s lives.

In even extreme cases the tension between the two approaches is rarely exerted in a fruitful manner. It is hardly surprising that governments invest money in youth work that stabilises the existing social order and not in youth work that would destabilise the status quo. Of course, in a democratic society there is always space for young people who want to create a critical social forum. Those young people that possess the social, cultural and financial capital to associate themselves are mostly young people that are already well integrated. That is the reason why social forum youth work easily reaches out to well-integrated young people, playing a critical role, but not against their own interests. Disadvantaged young people have scarce resources and therefore have to rely on a public provision or on the provision of private organisations that are substantially supported by the state. As we could observe throughout recent history the public provision in a welfare state attempts to reduce inequality in society. In economic good times this is done by adapting society to the needs of individual young people, but in times of crisis it works the other way round (see Watt and Batsleer in this volume).

In this manner, different approaches of youth work are enabled and supported in relation to the (desired) situation and behaviour of young people. Several papers unveil this mechanism by which youth work policy and practice in fact empower the powerful and disempower the vulnerable. There is a central role for youth research to bridge the gap between lived realities of young people in all their diversity and ideal models of youth development. The increasing purchaser–provider split between a (local) policy that sets out aims and outcomes and a youth work practice that gets money to realise the demanded outcomes makes this role all the more important. The more we separate policy, practice and research, the less we can identify and discuss the unintended consequences of the way a society often imposes too simple solutions on a complex reality characterised by social inequality, uneven power balances and an unjust distribution of wealth. In that sense, it is very important to argue strongly in favour of a youth work practice that deliberately defends a position in-between private aspirations and public expectations or in other words: between private associations and public services.

### → **The social educational deadlock: looking for a way out**

Is an autonomous “youth work as social practice” possible? The only way out seems to recognise the oxymoronic nature of youth work. Of course, as shown in history (and very clearly also in current times of financial crisis), this is a message that governments are only willing to buy in times of economic growth and

development. The recognition of an oxymoronic identity can help youth workers to cope with the inherent dilemmas they have to face in practice, but most probably it will not prevent youth work from being utterly dependent on the political priorities arising from economic circumstances. Perhaps a more feasible way out would be the explicit renewal of the recognition of youth work as a third socialisation environment in-between the family and the school. Whereas both the other socialisation environments have a more unilateral focus, often contributing to the inequalities that exist in capitalist market societies, youth work departs from a “social” perspective connecting individual aspirations to social expectations, but also relating them to the aspirations of others. This means that the explicit youth work functions identified throughout history are inextricably linked.

This was indeed one of the key messages of the 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy. Youth work fulfils different functions that cannot be disconnected from each other, nor from the social context in which young people grow up:

- Educational: youth work contributes to the individual development of young people. They acquire much needed competencies in our market societies based on risk and choice. Youth work offers opportunities to acquire and exercise competences and skills that are not evidently offered in schools or families.
- Social: youth work is a corrective to the inequality that is caused by market mechanisms in our society and often is reinforced by the educational impact of family and school. Youth work should open up opportunities that otherwise would not be there.
- Economic: youth work is partly professionalised but often remains heavily contingent on the contribution of volunteers. This levers in a huge economic dimension to youth work. The impact of volunteers on youth work is strong and in a sense makes a huge contribution to our society by fulfilling functions that would otherwise demand a huge investment from the welfare state. The development of youth work practice through co-operation between volunteers and professionals strengthens the social profile of youth work.
- Recreational: interwoven with these functions, youth work undeniably has a recreational nature. Playing and having fun creates the conditions to realise the other youth work functions. Young people learn by playing, they meet friends, explore society and different roles and, above all, they get access to activities and experiences they would not find at home or at school.

Youth work is a very diverse field of practice. This diversity should be cherished and should make up the foundations for the social recognition of youth work. In some countries, youth work is an established and to a large extent professionalised part of both the educational and social welfare system. In other countries, youth work develops relatively separated from these systems and is a practice carried out by volunteers. In most countries, youth work is a mix of all these interventions. In any case, youth workers should connect to history and thus also to each other. Youth work is a differentiated field but, through the recognition of its functions, also an allied field. It is a field that has to position itself in relation to family and school (as a central part of the so-called “third socialisation environment”), but also positioning itself in-between adult concerns and young people’s needs and aspirations. The 1st European Conference on the History of Youth Work and Youth Policy confirmed the comparative study of youth work histories as a rich mirror to reflect on our actual and future policies and practices, and most importantly to establish a solid social and educational identity for youth work, carried not only by youth workers themselves, but also by policy makers and researchers.

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*Pascal Lejeune*

## **Appendix History of youth mobility in Europe**

### **→ Historical overview**

#### **Developments since the 1980s**

**A**t the end of the 1980s, several European level schemes were set up to encourage youth mobility:

- they were seen as measures to accompany the formation of the Single Market;
- they were designed to enhance the wealth of Europe: its human resources;
- they were formed with the areas of education (Erasmus, 1987), vocational training (Comett, 1986) and youth (Youth for Europe, 1988).

At the beginning, the programmes:

- were very popular;
- benefited from strong support in the European Parliament;
- saw increasing budgets.



	Education		Vocational training				Youth
1986-1994	Erasmus	Lingua	Comett	Petra	Force	Eurotechnet	Youth for Europe <b>YIE I</b> 16.06.1988 1989-1991 15 MioEUR 235  <b>YIE II</b> 29.07.1991 1992-1994 25 MioEUR 235
	<i>Initial dec.</i> 15.06.1987 1987-1989 85 MioEUR 128 and 235	28.07.1989 1990-1994 200 MioEUR 128 and 135	<i>Comett I</i> 24.07.1986 1987-1989 45 MioEUR 128 and 235  <i>Comett II</i> 15.12.1988 1990-1994 200 MioEUR 128	<i>Initial dec.</i> 01.12.1987 1988-1991 — 128  <i>Prolongation</i> 22.07.1991 1992-1994 177.4 MioEUR 128	29.05.1990 1991-1994 24 MioEUR (2) 128	18.12.1989 1990-1994 7.5 MioEUR 128	
1995-1999	Socrates		Leonardo da Vinci				Youth for Europe <b>YIE III</b> 14.03.1995 1995-1999 126 MioEUR 126
	<i>Socrates I</i> 14.03.1995 1995-1999 920 MioEUR 126 and 127		<i>Leonardo da Vinci I</i> 06.12.1994 1995-1999 620 MioEUR 127				
2000-2006	Socrates		Leonardo da Vinci				Youth 13.04.2000 2000-2006 520 MioEUR 149
	<i>Socrates II</i> 24.01.2000 2000-2006 2 060 MioEUR 149 and 150		<i>Leonardo da Vinci II</i> 26.04.1999 2000-2006 1 255 MioEUR 150				
2007-2013	Lifelong Learning Programme						Youth in Action 15.11.2006 2007-2013 885 MioEUR 149
	Adoption	15.11.2006					
Duration	2007-2013						
Budget	6 970 MioEUR						
Article	149 and 150						

(1) For the first three years.

(2) For the first two years.

## → Regarding youth

The main milestones of the youth *programmes* (to support non-formal learning):

- Youth for Europe I: 1989-91 (€19.5 million);
- European Voluntary Service: 1998-99 (€48.4 million);
- Youth: 2000-06 (€715.7 million);
- Youth in Action: 2007-13 (€885 million);
- 1 639 000 participants in 20 years (1989-2008).

Later (since the 1990s), youth *policy* was developed:

- First, the inclusion of “youth” as a concept in European policy. In 1993 the Treaty of Maastricht extended the scope of EU policies to include the youth field, by virtue of Article 149, paragraph 2. This states that the EU should “... encourage the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors ...”;
- the White Paper on Youth – A New Impetus for European Youth – was adopted in November 2001. This contained a proposal to the EU’s member states to increase co-operation in four youth priority areas: participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth. The White Paper proposed to take the youth dimension more into account when developing other relevant policies, such as education and training, employment and social inclusion, health and anti-discrimination;
- on the basis of the White Paper, the Council of the European Union in June 2002 established a framework for European co-operation (the Open Method of Co-ordination) in the field of youth. Later, in November 2005, the framework was updated to take into account the European Youth Pact which focused, in relation to the Lisbon Strategy on the key policy themes for young people of education, employment and family life;
- in September 2007, a Communication on “Promoting the full participation of all young people in education, employment and society” was issued by the European Commission;
- in November 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted its first recommendation in the youth field: on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union. The recommendation seeks to boost co-operation between organisers of voluntary activities in the EU member states. These activities, whether developed by civil society or public authorities, should be opened up to young people from other EU countries. This would not replace the European Voluntary Service programme, but rather complement it and ensure a wider range of opportunities for participation. The expected result is that more young people will have the opportunities to enhance their knowledge of other countries, languages and cultures by taking part in voluntary activities. Concretely, the Council recommends that member states take the following actions:
  - raise awareness about cross-border volunteering;
  - develop opportunities for cross-border volunteering;
  - assure quality through the development of self-assessment tools;
  - recognise learning outcomes of voluntary activities through instruments such as Europass and Youthpass;
  - promote cross-border mobility of youth workers and young people in youth organisations;
  - pay particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

## → Mobility today

The following have benefited from the support of the Youth in Action programme:

- youth exchanges: 41 300 participants in 2008, of which 35 100 went abroad;
- youth initiatives: 13 500, of which 1 000 went abroad;
- youth democracy projects: 6 600, of which 3 800 went abroad;
- European Voluntary Service: 5 800 went abroad;
- exchanges with neighbouring countries: 12 000, of which 9 100 went abroad;
- projects aimed at supporting youth work: 32 300, of which 10 300 went abroad;
- meetings with those responsible for youth: 15 100, of which 1 200 went abroad.

The facts and figures presented above illustrates clearly that:

- there are more opportunities for mobility for young people; and also for youth workers: namely training courses (4 400 participants in 2008), seminars (2 300), partnership-building activities (1 200), etc;
- some activities do not include a mobility dimension.

In 2010, a new sub-action on mobility for youth workers (based on reciprocity if possible) was set up for six months.

## → Contemporary youth policy in the European Union

As regards youth policy: a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field was adopted by the Council at the end of 2009, based on the Commission proposal entitled “An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering”. The new strategy invites both the member states and the Commission, during the period 2010-18, to co-operate in the youth field by means of a renewed open method of co-ordination. It proposes a cross-sectoral approach, with both short- and long-term actions, which involve all key policy areas that affect Europe’s young people. It emphasises the importance of youth work and defines reinforced measures for a better implementation of youth policies at EU level. The strategy invites all member states to organise a permanent and regular dialogue (structured dialogue) with young people. Furthermore, the Commission in its strategy encourages a more research and evidence-based youth policy. It includes eight lines of action:

- education and training;
- employment and entrepreneurship;
- health and well-being;
- participation;
- voluntary activities;
- social inclusion;
- creativity and culture;
- youth and the world.

## → Looking to the future: recent developments

Spring 2008: High Level Group on Mobility in Europe.

Summer 2009: Green Paper on Learning Mobility.

September 2010: Youth on the Move, a flagship initiative to implement the “smart growth” dimension of the EU 2020 Agenda.

Youth on the Move will focus on four main lines of action:

- smart and inclusive growth depends on actions throughout the lifelong learning system, to develop key competences and quality learning outcomes, in line with labour market needs;
- Europe needs to raise the percentage of young people participating in higher education or its equivalent to keep up with competitors in the knowledge-based economy and to foster innovation;
- the EU's support for learning mobility through programmes and initiatives will be reviewed, expanded and linked up with national and regional resources. The international dimension will be reinforced. Youth on the Move will support the aspiration that by 2020 all young people in Europe should have the possibility to spend a part of their educational pathway abroad, including via workplace-based training;
- Europe must urgently improve the employment situation of young people. Youth on the Move presents a framework of policy priorities for action at national and EU level to reduce youth unemployment by facilitating the transition from school to work, and reducing labour market segmentation.

Based on a political initiative, a proposal for a new programme in the field of youth should be adopted by the Commission in 2011 (public consultation in autumn 2010). [Editor's note: initially conceptualised as "Education Europe", drawing together all EU educational programmes, the new overarching programme – accommodating what were formerly programmes such as Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo, as well as Youth in Action – will be called "Erasmus for All". This development has caused some consternation in the youth field, despite reassurances from the European Commissioner responsible, on the grounds that the distinctiveness of methodologies in the field of youth may get subordinated to broader formal education and employment objectives.]

### → Rationale of EU intervention

There is a drive to offer non-formal learning opportunities, with a view to enhance:

- employability of young people;
- participation of young people (notably in the context of the Lisbon Treaty).

In the respect of the subsidiarity principle, but taking also into account the added value of a programme which makes it possible to share best practices at European level, the European youth programme has provided benefits:

- for the young participants themselves;
- for youth work (youth workers, youth organisations) through the "multiplying effect";
- for the youth system (through the impact the programme may have in both filling a gap in certain countries and serving as a model for development of similar programmes within participating countries).

In so doing, the programme puts a strong emphasis on transnational activities.

Another important feature is the focus on young people with fewer opportunities.

Finally, this programme is open to the participation of third countries.

## → Results – impact

Quantitative:

- more than 130 000 participants per year (1 million over the lifetime of the programme);
- more than 7 000 projects supported every year (one project approved for every two submitted), mainly managed in a decentralised way through a network of national agencies established in the participating countries.

Qualitative:

- evaluation reports (the final evaluation of the Youth programme and the mid-term evaluation of the Youth in Action programme);
- a survey of a sample of participants on the impact of the Youth in Action programme (January 2010).

The main results of the survey:

- Among the young participants:
  - 95% consider that they learned to communicate better with people who speak another language;
  - 86% consider that they learned better how to achieve something in the interest of their community or society;
  - 77% learned better how to identify opportunities for their personal or professional future;
  - 92% say that the projects made them more receptive to multiculturalism in Europe;
  - 66% believe that their job chances have increased thanks to the project experience.
- Among the youth workers:
  - 95% of the respondents consider that they will now give more attention to including an international dimension in their work;
  - 88% consider that they gained skills and knowledge which they would not be able to gain through projects organised at national level.
- Among the youth organisations:
  - 92% consider as “very true” or “somewhat true” that participating in a project supported by Youth in Action increased their project management skills;
  - 94% consider as “very true” or “somewhat true” that it increased their appreciation of cultural diversity.

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