



## **What About Youth Political Participation?**

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Centre, Strasbourg**

Final Report on the proceeding and recommendations for implementation  
of European Objectives on participation.

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is based on the papers given by researchers at the Research Seminar on political participation at the European youth centre, Strasbourg in November 2003. The participants at the seminar were from across the social sciences researchers including political science, sociology, social psychologists, youth research and education researchers to critically reflect on the political participation of young people in Europe. The report is also based on the discussion coming from the research papers and the recommendation panel who was made up from representatives from governmental youth policy field (Lasse Siurala), NGO and in particular the European Youth Forum (Anna Sellberg) and from educational practice and research (Gavan Titley).

The first section of the report highlights the notable trends that arose from the research across Europe. The second section draws out the policy implication from these key trends towards the European Commission Common Objectives on participation. At the end of the report are a list of key words that have been used in the research with definitions that could be useful for policy makers or educationalists working in the area of political participation. The appendix includes the full list of participants.

## **2. The report**

### **Key Trends**

In this section of the report I will draw out the key trends that arose from the research. It will not cover the finer nuances and complexities, such as those caused by immigration and emigration; for this detail there will be a publication within the context of the research partnership in which the majority of papers given at the research seminar will be present. The trends that arose out of the research are notable in their consistency across the wider Europe and across the different academic fields present at the meeting, thus, quite unusually for the social sciences, a clear picture emerged in the field of youth participation across Europe, with little notable division between east and west.

#### **Different forms of political engagement**

As a group young people were seen to be declining in their interest in traditional forms of politics and political parties as can be seen from declining levels of voting and membership in youth sections of political parties and youth organisations as a whole. This trend towards decline in traditional participation is similar to that in rest of the population. The results of the seminar suggested that the reduction in traditional political participation did not indicate that young people as a whole were less interested in politics. There are some young people who reflect the notion of apathy and who are disengaged from their community and who do not invoke their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The youth policies on young people's political participation should be directed towards this work. However, some young people are actively interested in political participation and this interest can be seen from the research to be increasing. The necessary step for understanding how young people politically participate is to change the definition of political participation to encompass new forms of political engagement. It should be noted that a substantial number of young people are still involved in traditional politics and political youth organisations. These young people should be recognised for their contribution to sustained democracy. The previously used indicators of voting and participation in political parties are no longer adequate for measurement of political engagement for society as a whole and in particular youth. The definition of political

participation needs to be enlarged to encapsulate the latest developments, interests, expressions and identities of the group being studied. Although young people now can be understood to be much more individualistic and consumer orientated, having been born into a globalised, risk society filled with individual choice and competition to succeed, there, appears to be little correlation between this and political apathy in the wider sense of politics. When young people do participate these elements often form the basis for their political involvement. The personal and private sphere of people's everyday lives are where political interest is high and when young people discuss 'politics' in their own terms (thereby widening the definition of politics and political participation), then there is evidence of much higher levels of political interest and activity. When young people are participating politically it can relate to what clothes they wear or what food they purchase. Young people often like to have fun and there is an element of irony and play in songs, posters and in their protest. What this demonstrates is that there is a real need for politicians to understand young people and their political engagement in order that they can communicate with them.

#### One-off issue politics

Young people are less and less either members of political parties or discuss their political identity towards a conventional direction of left and right. The research has shown that young people see little differences in the policies of left and right parties and their political programmes. Some young people instead of being involved in these parties are more interested in one-off issue politics on a global level. These young people are interested either in anti-war protest, anti-capitalism/ alter-globalization, animal rights, gender equality, the environment and world peace. On these topics young people mobilise for 'one-off' events. These events, for example in the alter-globalisation movement, can be creative, use information technology and try out ways of doing politics differently. The young people in these movements such as ATTAC are not well integrated, often critiquing how these organisations are run and prefer to organise their own one-off events at the 'official' protest events. There seems to be a difficulty between the age groups in protest politics, for example in the anti-war protests they liked to have fun: there is an element of play in their songs, posters and protests that antagonised the older protesters.

Another example of a 'one-off' event was when young people from Spain were engaged in protest and volunteering to clean up was after the catastrophic oil leak from the Prestige oil tanker. Participation in these events does not necessarily lead to greater involvement in traditional politics, as for example this protest, along with the Spanish protest against changes in universities and the war in Iraq did not alter the government policies, initiate higher levels of voting or effect the government being re-elected. As this example would suggest, the research has shown that many young people do not feel that they are listened to or feel that they can impact government policy in anyway. The hypothesis was given that young people involved in protest movements may later on in life become involved in more traditional politics and that this could be part of a life-cycle of political engagement. This hypothesis requires more research to confirm its validity.

#### Learning democratic process in everyday life

Those young people are demonstrating a sense of apathy and disengagement from politics i.e. those not interested in either traditional or more innovative political participation are frequently those who have not had the opportunity to learn political engagement. These are young people who in their homes, schools and in their leisure time have not had a chance to learn from experience of democratic processes and have had little opportunity to engage with present day political issues. These young people have been shown by the research to be vulnerable to peer education into extremist and violent political movements.

Political socialisation was considered crucial to active citizenship and political participation in society. The research has shown that there are different areas where young people learn active political participation. These areas were outlined by Pfaff as family, school, peers, leisure

time and through the media. Political socialisation was considered an active and complex process as adolescents interact directly and indirectly with parents, teacher, the media and peers (McLeod 2000). It can also be affected by one-off political events like those whose youth experience was formed by the transition from capitalism to communism. One difference between east and west for young people in Europe is that their parents have been socialised in different worlds and young people's experience of democracy in the east is more on a day to day basis and not formed through their parent's experience of it.

The most important indicator of young people's political participation was seen as the role of the family in teaching democracy. It was emphasised that it played a key factor in the socialisation of young people into political participation. The research has shown that there is a correlation between discussing politics in the family home, encouragement of independent thinking and democratic decision making process in the family with active political participation. This research has highlighted the lack of political discussion that is taking place in many homes across Europe. It is interesting that Howoitz's research in Poland showed that those young people who experienced the least interpersonal political discussion were the most cynical about politics.

The research from the seminar demonstrated the powerful role that peers have in politically educating each other in youth cultures, particularly if the school and the family have not provided this role. Friends provide a network of trust that young people are willing to learn from and follow. Peer education, if harnessed towards democratic values can be used positively to promote positive political participation. However, the example from the research seminar in east Germany was where peers were teaching each other very effectively about right wing and extremist ideology.

#### Trust

Another reason for the declining interest in formal politics, that was a feature of the papers given in the seminar, was the lack of trust of politicians and political parties. As Pfaff has pointed out, trust is much greater for young people in new social movements like 'Green Peace' than in politicians and political parties. This is considered a serious matter as 'trust is a central component of democracy, is a crucial element of political participation and is a key factor in societal stability. Trust allows bonds of social and functional cooperation to mature, establishing links that are fundamental for maintaining a society and for allowing progress, good administration and defusing conflict'. Although this link is qualified in the research, lower levels of trust and confidence in governments has been attributed to the notion of 'bowling alone' (the general lack of interest of people in their community, a weakened civic participation, and a decline in support for public institutions). There was a clear message to politicians from young people that in order to gain their trust they wanted greater honesty in politics given through clear, plain speaking (not made too simple) and serious messages not from politicians trying to be young or appearing on big brother as these gimmicks fail, make the politicians look ridiculous and trivialise the subject.

#### Political parties

The research from the seminar showed that whilst political parties have frequently talked about wanting young people to vote and participate in politics, it is not clear that in all contexts they really desire this or work to this end. Young people when they vote tend to vote for more radical parties either right or left and they generally do not support the current government of the day. Young people are increasingly a smaller proportion of the population of Europe and thus their votes also hold less political sway even if they are actualised.

Political parties no longer need mass membership as they work through an elite group who spread their message through the mass media. Thus parties no longer emphasise actively working on recruiting members and spend little money and effort on recruiting young people

for their youth wings. The research indicated that political parties must take more responsibility for recruitment and renewal of democracy.

### **3. Policy recommendation from the research**

The policy question which was highlighted by the research seminar is how to engage the group of young people who are apathetic and are not politically involved. In the following section of the report I will focus on the political objectives on participation given by the European Commission and focus the policy implications from the research towards them.

The initiative for having a research seminar on the topic of young people's political participation was largely due to the conception of the European Commission Common objectives on participation. The European level policy objectives were created through consultation with EU member states (this method is called the Open Method of Coordination). It will now be the job of the member states to implement these policy objectives and to compile progress reports for 2005 on how their countries are reaching the objectives that have been set. One of the purposes then for the seminar was to give ideas to the member states on how to implement these objectives. In accordance with this purpose I have taken the policy recommendations from the research into each of the commission objectives categories so that a policy maker can use this report to help them in their implementation process. The objectives cover three areas: participation in the civic life of their community, participation in the system of representative democracy and learning to participate. When it is relevant, the Council of Europe local and regional authority Charter on political participation is referred to as this text is coherent with the Commission objectives and gives more details of how these objectives can be applied.

#### **Objective 1 - increase the participation by young people in the civic life of their community;**

This objective sets out to promote the involvement of young people in structures in NGOs, voluntary services, associations and local youth councils, encourage the development of projects by young people at the local level, give recognition to those who facilitate this work (like youth workers and parents) and identify what prevents young people from being able to participate in their local community.

Recommendations for implementing objectives from the seminar:

- Funding for national, regional and local level youth councils and youth organisations.
- Encourage membership in youth councils and youth organisations of under represented groups in the political arena such as women and minorities
- Facilitate and/or encourage political parties to open up dialogue with young people involved in issue one off issue politics and to try and build on their creativity
- Create the possibility that young people can learn democratic skills and citizenship wherever they spend their leisure time such as in sports clubs

Explanation from the research

Youth Organisations attached to political parties have been shown through the research to be an important site for young people to learn whilst simultaneously engaging in political

participation. Thus the young people are acquiring the skills and culture of politics and at the same time learning the party ideology. The careers of many politicians across Europe have their origins in political youth organisations and the research suggests that it has been an important building block in their careers. In Belgium Hooze's research showed that 40% of current politicians were involved in youth political parties. He demonstrated that membership gives a person a competitive advantage over their peers at all points in their political careers which implies for policy that those groups who are less represented in politics, such as women and ethnic minorities may well benefit from strategic early recruitment into youth parties. The consequence of an ever declining youth membership of such political organisations is an ever increasing split between the parties and their public. The Council of Europe charter on participation states that:

56. Local and regional authorities, in partnership with political parties and in a non-partisan manner, should promote the involvement of young people in the party political system in general, and support specific actions, such as training

Other sites where a similar learning process can take place are in Youth Councils. The Council of Europe Youth Charter on Political Participation suggests the effective participation of young people requires the development of permanent youth councils. The research has shown that those youth councils that have managed to cooperate into a united forum within their country and those that are recognised as partners in the development of youth policy and across Europe within the context of the youth forum have been effective in influencing youth policy. When youth councils are actively involved in building government programmes then success can be shown, such as the example given by Dolejsiova who showed from a case study in Slovakia that youth councils could initiate important institutional changes for young people. There has been shown to be some positive link at the European level to youth policy in this direction, demonstrating greater involvement of young people in participation.

Membership of youth organisations as a whole are decreasing and as a result there is a danger that young people are not practising democracy anywhere, so in order to teach political participation democratic processes should be developed and encouraged where young people are and can be reached. If young people spend more time in sports clubs and other leisure activities then the promotion of democratic methods and citizenship in these organisations or activities should be encouraged. There needs to be a greater emphasis on the public sphere as a space for learning citizenship skills. In the seminar the example of rock climbing as political acts in France was discussed (Leseleuc et al 2002). It should be clarified that where young people are can be different depending on the national, regional and local context. The Council of Europe charter suggests organised local and regional support of socio-cultural activities in the 'fields of sport, culture, crafts and trade, artistic and other forms of creation and expression, as well as in the field of social action'. The charter also emphasises the need to support young people if they wish to create new youth organisations.

The alter-globalisation and the issue politics movements have been hypothesised within Players research that was reported at the seminar by Players also to be a site where young people learn about political participation and citizenship. Young people in these movements are shown to be learning from their experiences how to be active citizens, 'how to formulate and present ideas, participate in debates, listen and negotiate, as well as learn the ability to initiate projects and to use new technologies'. They are disseminating information by themselves to other young people through modern technologies.

Young people have a desire to do politics differently and those involved in these movements do want to influence the way society works. Their rejection of the political system at this age may be part of a life-cycle into other methods of political participation in democracy. This possibility could be enhanced through creating and opening a dialogue with young people involved in these movements and political parties. The research has hypothesised that these

young people can represent a resource of new energy and creativity in the political arena which could reinvigorate traditional democracy and politics.

## **Objective 2. increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy;**

The European Commission objective on representative democracy states the need to encourage a structured and regular dialogue between public and or government authorities and young people and their representative structures in order to involve young people more in public life. They emphasise the need to include all young people and not just those within structures and organisations and to find out what prevents young people from participating in this way. From the research seminar it was possible to identify the following suggestions to implement these objectives:

- Promote to political parties the need for young people's political participation and the benefit to their parties of youth membership
- Understand that participation is not an end in itself, where young people are asked to participate evaluation should take place to demonstrate how their involvement has influenced the process

### **Explanation from the research**

A key point that was raised by the Research of Mark Hooge was that the demand for young people's political participation in traditional politics has much decreased. The blame for lack of participation has been frequently placed on the young people without examining if there is a demand for it. Parties as a whole no longer required mass membership and work through a select elite so there is less funding and emphasis on recruitment of young people into youth wings of the political parties. Parties make much more use of the mass media than volunteers to spread the message. A very relevant question that he asked was 'Are parties still interested in young people?', in particular if you consider that they are also becoming a smaller and smaller proportion of the electorate. The policy implication is the need to demonstrate to all political parties the importance of young people's participation in order to ensure the continuation of their party and the validity of democracy in their country.

Participation per se has been shown through the research to be not necessarily good, useful for institutions or effective for young people. The research seminar put into question the notion the 'young people doing something' must be inherently good. The researchers have suggested that participation in policy making needs evaluation research involving the creation of indicators of quality. 'Participation should not be non-committal, but the participation process should have a clear effect on the policy making and implementation' (Leen Schilleman 2003). A suggestion for participation was that: all young people regardless of ethnicity, gender or class etc should have the opportunity to participate, that the policies and implementation can be seen to be formed from the young people and that participation should be encouraged during all the stages of policy from development to evaluation. The evaluation research that has been carried out in Belgium by Leen Schilleman has shown that participation of some young people can create new inequalities of participation. The research showed that young people's participation in certain youth policy projects had a very small effect on improving youth policy and had the effect of making youth policy into an administrative issue. Her conclusion was that young people's political participation should be considered as a wider issue than involving some young people in a number of projects aimed specifically at the creation of youth policy. Quality forms of participation were considered to be systems like the Council of Europe co-management system where youth organisations are consider full partners. The charter gives some useful suggestions on participation methodology:

They should create the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities and they should enable young people and their representatives to be full actors in the policies affecting them. Such structures should normally be representative and permanent, dealing with all matters in which young people express an interest. In addition it can be envisaged that an ad hoc structure can be made to debate or act upon a specific issue. On occasion it may be appropriate to combine different forms.

### **Objective 3 – greater support for various forms of learning to participate**

The Commission objectives for supporting learning to participate focuses on extending training on this topic in the formal education system, encouragement of participation activities in the non-formal education field and develop the interaction between these different forms of education on participation. It states the need for recognition of those people who work to promote active citizenship and training in this field and the need to recognise young people who do participate whilst at the same time combating prejudice that prevents some young people from participation. It also emphasises the development of experiences of participation in all forms of life including the family, schools, in youth organisations, at university, at other place of education and at work, in sporting and leisure time contexts. Many of the results from the research seminar focused on this objective and the recommendations for how to implement these objectives were suggested as the following:

- Democratic methods and processes used in the structures of formal education
- Innovative methods used to teach political participation in the classroom
- Politics of the day discussed in schools
- More education needed on citizenship, rights and responsibilities
- Training of teachers and parents on how to implement democratic methods
- Greater use of youth workers in formal education environment
- Creating a dialogue between formal and non-formal educators
- Creating a dialogue between youth sector non-formal educators and youth researchers
- Provide youth sector non-formal educators with training on research and social analysis so that they can translate results into practice
- Promote youth workers' support of peer education projects

Explanation from the research

#### **Formal education**

The research has shown that often the only discussion of citizenship and politics in schools is in specified lessons on politics as a subject and the contents then refers mainly towards how political institutions work. The research has shown that in formal education on politics where active teaching methods are not used the students tend to have a lower interest in politics. What students said to the researchers that they wanted was to be able to discuss politics of the day that interested them, to have active lessons and to have a greater say in how the school is run. When students experience having a greater say within the school system such as having school councils, then these young people are more likely to be interested and engaged in political participation. Young people generally lacked knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as a citizen of their nation and often knew little about European citizenship. There is a need for adult education, the training of teachers, parents and those who are involved with young people how to introduce democratic methodologies and the greater use of youth workers in the formal education environment. Youth workers could be used to facilitate school councils and to demonstrate the pedagogical element behind them. The Council of Europe charter is also useful to look at for how to implement the objectives in formal education: It states the need for

in the school environment, support and training in youth participation, human rights education and non-formal learning in schools. They (local and regional authorities) should also provide training and support for the participation of young people in associative life and in their local community by promoting:

- i. vocational training for teachers and youth workers in the practice of youth participation;
- ii. all forms of participation of pupils in schools;
- iii. civic education programmes in schools;
- iv. peer-group education, by providing the necessary space and means and by supporting the exchange of good practice.

#### Non-formal education

The role of youth workers and trainers for young people to learn active citizenship was demonstrated through the research to be vital. Youth workers and trainers can provide value based education that discusses the issues of the day and at the same time lives the issues of the day through the group interaction. Democracy, anti-racism and human rights are learned through doing these activities and reflecting upon the individual behaviour and group dynamics. Youth work has been shown to teach young people beyond the formal contexts into understanding and practising active citizenship. Youth researchers have been shown to play a role in non-formal education as acting as a witness to demonstrate the benefits from this form of youth educational practice.

One of the methods to come from youth work and educational practice is peer education. As discussed in the research seminar, peers form a network of trust which young people learn from. Youth workers and trainers have developed the skills to support young people to teach other people of a similar age about active citizenship and political competencies. Without the support of youth workers peer education can negatively effect young people's political engagement.

One of the competencies that trainers and youth workers were less strong on was being able to work from research findings and creating their own social analysis and needs analysis from which they could develop stronger youth work. There is a tendency within this field to work from conviction rather than through evidence based youth work. The research seminar highlighted the need for training trainers and youth workers with researchers on how to understand and translate the research results into practice and how to carry out needs analysis of their own. Improving trainers and youth workers competence in this field can assist in providing better quality youth work and also the production of a greater understanding of youth as it will provide researchers with analysis performed by people who have more direct experience with young people.

#### Interaction between non-formal and formal education

The research presented by Berrefjord clearly demonstrated the benefits for young people's active engagement in politics when youth workers and schools/ school teachers work together. Working together can facilitate the introduction of democratic engagement of young people in the school environment through learning from methods of good practice. Teachers and youth workers often hold stereotypes about each other's methods and styles and it was important for these two groups to work through their differences. A dialogue was also developed by young people attending the school and the youth group. This example of cooperation changed methods to increase democracy and participation both in the formal and non formal sector. The project resulted in the young people in the area became more actively engaged, greater inclusion of minorities and the young people were generally more interested in their community.

The role of the family was seen as having the largest influence on teaching young people's active engagement. The family home was seen as the centre of development of independent thinking and a place where young people learned about democracy from it being practised in the home. Consideration of what family policies could be developed to bring together the concepts of youth, citizenship and the home would be important in the process of increasing learning to participate.

#### **4. Key word dictionary**

This section of the report is a compilation of definitions from the draft research papers that were submitted before the research seminar many of the definitions come from the keynote talk from Siyka Kovacheva who presented the key concepts in the field. This section is designed to support policy makers understand what the researchers are talking about.

##### **Citizenship**

Young people's social exclusion from rights and entitlements in society- young people's access to civil political and social rights in a given community. It is also about "belonging" to one's nation and having the responsibility to contribute to its well being.

Citizenship is a wider concept than a legal or civil status and is linked to people's willingness and ability to actively participate in society (Dwyer 2000). Also, citizenship is no longer limited to the structures of the nation-state (Delanty 2000) but is performed when citizens take responsibility in their relations to a wide range of private and public institutions. Applying the broader approach to citizenship, Roker and Eden (2002) develop a concept of constructive social participation. It encompasses various social actions: formal voluntary work, informal community networks, neighbourliness, informal political action, awareness-raising, altruistic acts, and caring work at home and the community, through which young people 'participate in their communities and influence policies and practices in the world around them' (Roker and Eden, 2002:7).

##### **Consumerism**

Consumerism among young people in Central and Eastern Europe might be a serious challenge to their civic participation. During communism youth consumption was rendered a political meaning by the oppressive state, which politicized and punished all youth autonomous activities aiming at self-expression. Young people's efforts to obtain Western consumer goods in the closed economy of the Soviet Block were a way of gaining autonomy and gave an identity different from the one promoted and controlled by the official institutions (Wallace and Kovacheva, 1998). Under post-communism the anti-state connotation of leisure is gone. Some authors (Meier, 2002) interpret the spectacular consumption of the affluent groups among youth as a behavior that ignores politics and the rest of society. Others (Mitev, 2003) explain this pursuit of pleasure with the encouragement of parents who try to open a generational umbrella over their offspring and provide them with fashion clothes or latest modifications of mobile phones, willingly limiting their own personal consumption. However, it might also be seen as a form of new more individualized and flexible

political participation, similar to the trend discerned by Micheletti (2003) among Western youth.

### **Individualisation**

Individualization is another global trend that young people in Central and Eastern Europe share with their Western counterparts. Attitudinal surveys (Kovacheva et al, 2003; Machacek, 2000; Ule et al, 2000) have documented the growing inclination to search for individual solutions and lack of reliance upon solidarity, which are major obstacles in front of youth participation in the region. Not only opportunities but also risks are being fragmented under post-communism. Rising aspirations and limited resources urge young people to develop individual strategies for success and dislike collective action. One of the consequences of this trend is the wide spread unwillingness among young people in post-communist countries to participate in formal youth organizations with regular membership and routine activities. Unlike young people's activities in Western Europe, youth projects directed particularly at creating official structures are very common for youth activities in the countries with feeble democracies. Many youth initiatives in Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia have been successful in establishing youth participatory structures: school unions, town councils, and ecological clubs. There is still a need for more flexible models of participatory microstructures that will be appealing to young people in the region.

### **Juventization**

Unlike the classic notions of youth participation as a passive process of development and integration into societal structures, youth researchers in communist Eastern Europe in the 1980s linked it to the concept of 'juventization'. Mahler (1983) and Mitev (1982) offered an understanding of youth as an active and committed group and described participation as a two-way process - an interaction rather than integration, a development of both young people and society. From this perspective young people were seen as the group who produced new values and who, through their active participation in social life, changed and "rejuvenated" society. The effect of youth participation was societal innovation. In the political context of the societies with one-party regimes, however, this concept was soon blended into the dominant constructs of the official ideology, leaving aside and subduing its critical dimension towards the status quo.

### **Social capital**

Norms and networks of civil society that enable citizens and their institutions to perform more productively. Without adequate supplies of social capital – that is, civic engagement, healthy community institutions, norms of mutual reciprocity, and trust – democracies and market economies may begin to falter (Pharr and Putnam 2000:26)

### **Trust**

'trust is a central component of democracy, is a crucial element of political participation and a key factor in societal stability. Trust allows bonds of social and functional cooperation to mature, establishing links that are fundamental for maintaining a society and for allowing progress, good administration and defusing conflict. Trust is closely linked to social capital which has been defined as people's

involvement in associations, networks that link citizens, or shared resources. ' Blanch (2003). The various types of trust will, in turn, determine the levels of social capital in a society. Anheier and Kendall (2002: 350) distinguish thick trust, which is "embedded in highly personal relations that usually form the densest part of an extended network of family and friendship ties", from thin trust or social trust, which is "based on everyday contacts, professional and acquaintance networks, involves a much greater number of ties that form less dense relations". As societies develop they move away from thick trust, towards thin trust, which allows people to function in broader or more institutional contexts. Thin trust is beneficial for modern democracies, as is the related type known as bridging social capital, which is formed by "instilling habits of co-operation, solidarity and public-spiritidness..." (Anheier and Kendall, 2002: 352). A further distinction of types of trust is to be found in Zucker's work, who defines characteristic-based trust as that which is tied to a person's culture, values and behavior; process-based trust, which is tied to a reputation of stability and reliability; and, finally, institutionally-based trust, based on institutions that provide certifications, forms, or legal constraints (Zucker, 1986: 60). In modern societies there tends to be more institutional trust than characteristic-based or process-based trust, due to the change in types of relations between people. Thin trust is involved in the formation of institutional trust, which requires trust in people we don't know personally but can rely on based on a collective memory of an institution and its performance.

## **Youth Participation**

In the 1990s the European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the Youth Field (CDEJ) developed a new pro-active understanding of youth participation, postulating that: "participation is not an aim in itself, but an approach to becoming active citizen participation as a means of 'taking an active role both in the development of one's own environment and in European co-operation' "(CDEJ 1997:7). Such an approach was accepted in the design of the study of youth experiments in European Union member states (Boukobza 1998). The operational definition used in this study accepts Golubovic's (1982) ample interpretation: "power based on the possibility of exerting influence on the economic and social aspects of life in the broad community".

## **Youth Political Participation**

Groups of young people, who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of raising awareness, or challenging policies and/or practices, at a local, national or international level. Eden and Roker (2002)

Modern participation ' representative participation and direct participation with all their variants, such as NGO based structures, co management, youth parliaments, school councils, youth hearings, demonstrations (Siurala 2000)

Post modern or emergent and future forms of participation various types of expressive, emotional, aesthetic, casual virtual and digital participation (Siurala 2000)

Kovacheva (2000) implied a pro-active, problem-solving approach to youth participation perceiving it as the active involvement of young people in the social transformation of their societies.

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