Chapter 13

A brief history of youth work in Spain

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Introduction

The first step before undertaking this brief review of the history of youth work in Spain will be to provide some clarifications concerning the actual concept of youth work. It is not easy to find a suitable translation in Spanish, and there is no equivalent in the academic literature on youth. Furthermore, there may be some confusion over the meaning of the word "work" because, in Spanish, it is associated with the job market, where, as everyone knows, the insecurity faced by young people is an issue which dates back at least to the crisis of the 1970s and the first labour reforms of the 1980s. Neither is the word "youth" free from misunderstandings and contradictions. One misunderstanding that is usually overlooked is the confusion between youth and young people (Casal, Merino and Garcia 2011). On the one hand, we have "youth", seen usually from an "adultocratic" perspective as a more or less homogeneous social group, arousing public concern either because of the threat posed by the supposed predominance of anomic or counter-cultural behaviour or because of this age group's structural precariousness. On the other hand, we have "young people" enjoying a certain degree of autonomy in developed societies and striving to become social players on an individual or collective level, with demands, actions and organisations that depart from the traditional models for the transition to adulthood.

It therefore makes sense to talk about "youth work" when young people emerge as differentiated social players, when they act as a specific category distinct from other social groups, see themselves as separate, and are so seen by established social structures. We can thus define youth work on the basis of three elements which belong to the same semantic field but have different, although in some respects related, dynamics:

- young people's social movements and associations, either as social and educational frameworks for young people or as specifically youth movements that identify themselves as such;
- policies aimed at youth as a social group, often defined, simply but effectively, as an age group;
- social and educational work with young people, especially young people and groups of young people at risk. Although the word "risk" is itself not unambiguous (Romaní 2011), social work with young people is often confined to young people in a situation of social, educational and/or work-related risk, or young people exhibiting antisocial behaviour.

The emergence of young people as a social group and as individual and/or collective players is obviously related to a society's economic, cultural and historical development. In this respect, recent Spanish history has some specific features that will be outlined very briefly in order to help understand the emergence, development and consolidation of the entire youth work sector. Strange as it may seem, there is no comprehensive work dealing with the history of Spanish youth in the modern era. There are only partial contributions, such as a dictionary of pre-civil war youth political organisations (Casteràs 1974), a brief article on youth associations up to 1936 (Sáez 1982), some compilations dealing with specific periods, such as the interwar period (Souto 2007) and the Franco years (Mir 2007), and an overview, which has not been updated, of the history of youth in modern Catalonia (Ucelay da Cal 1987).

First of all, as will be explained in the next section, the early origins of youth work have to be seen in the context of the late and uneven development of the economic, social, cultural and political structures of Spanish capitalism. Owing to the country's small industrial base (with the well-known exceptions of Catalonia and the Basque Country), its low level of urban development and the delays in developing a modern education system, youth as a specific social group took a long time to appear on the public agenda, except for philanthropic reasons or for directly political reasons in the turbulent years of the first third of the 20th century.

In the third section, we discuss a very bleak period of modern Spanish history, the Francoist dictatorship. In the fascist sociopolitical movements of European countries in the 1930s, albeit with some distinctive features in Spain (the influence of the Catholic religion and the fact that they won the Civil War and stayed in power until the 1970s), youth was seen as a vehicle for ideological indoctrination, and a whole youth policy *avant la lettre* emerged, with the setting up of youth organisations subservient to the new fascistoid regime, which were linked with educational institutions, but also with specific new leisure-time activities. Starting in the 1960s, with the rise of anti-Franco social and political movements, the repercussions of the May 1968 student protests in France and the first counter-cultural youth movements, young people played a significant part in the social changes that brought the Franco regime to an end.

As will be seen in the fourth section, the transition to a democratic regime contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the youth work field and to a gradual convergence with other European countries (at a faster pace after Spain joined the European Union in 1986). Youth policies were developed at all levels of public administration, a whole network of youth organisations came into being (centred on youth councils) and social and educational work with young people became more professional and technical. Although there were some darker sides (the disaffection of the more highly politicised anti-Franco youth or the severity of the recession in the late 1970s and its impact on the collapse of the labour market), it may be said that a more or less comparable system of youth work to that of other European countries was gradually constructed.

The sudden emergence of the "*indignados*" of the 15-M movement on the Spanish public agenda in 2011, with major international repercussions, represented what we may describe as a paradigm shift in young people's way of thinking and acting. In our conclusion, we therefore provide a brief analysis of this paradigm shift, in

which the effects of the economic recession and the crisis of political legitimacy were combined with some specifically Spanish elements (the real-estate bubble and the high degree of political and institutional corruption), with ongoing consequences in terms of young people's participation in collective action, the reorganisation of youth policies and young people's new (and also old) socio-educational demands.

Origins of youth work

> In this age of rejuvenation of humankind, we are all obliged to be young. Republican Youth of Lleida felt this present great juncture in history strongly and intimately. Its works testify to its spirit and are the best promise for a shining future. (*El Ideal*, January 1919)

> We are living in an age of heroism, and anguish … Youth is faced with the danger of imminent war … Youth, our heroic youth, has accomplished its duties. The duties of the present hour. Taking up arms and fighting until the reaction is finally defeated. To this end, it is guarding the streets with weapons at the ready. We must crush the reaction. And then defend victory and continue the fight nobly and sincerely. (*Combat*, July 1936)

These two quotations taken from two youth periodicals represent two contrasting moments in the origins of youth work in Spain. The first is from a speech by Julián Besteiro – one of the leaders of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) – at the inauguration of the new headquarters of Republican Youth of Lleida, one of many local politico-cultural organisations whose interests combined political renewal with youth issues. The second is from an editorial published in the news organ of Iberian Communist Youth (linked with the anti-Stalinist POUM, the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) in the early days of the civil war, associating youth with the crisis and ideological and military confrontation.

The birth of youth work in Spain has a number of distinctive features in relation to other European countries. First, as a consequence of late industrial and urban development there was considerable delay in the arrival and consolidation of the main associative, educational and political trends in the youth field. Second, there was the central role played by the Catholic Church in contrast to the marginal and subordinate role of the state. Third, the strong paternalistic or local political control exercised by adult institutions and the failure to give youth movements a say in the country's social and political development (at least until the advent of the Second Republic in 1931). Fourth, there was the almost exclusively male membership of most associations (with the exception of the Second Republic, the civil war and the anti-Franco movement). Last, there was the pioneering role played in the development of youth projects by the two regions with the highest levels of industrialisation and, at the same time, emerging nationalist movements: the Basque Country and Catalonia.

The first experiments in youth work were promoted by the Catholic Church in the late 19th century. Catholic Action sought to "re-evangelise" young people from both the emerging urban middle classes and the working classes by providing education for them in their free time, because of the risk that they would be drawn to revolutionary ideologies. Christian schools played a major role, but it was mainly in the parishes that some priests began to experiment with more modern and more grassroots forms of contact with children and adolescents. Mention should also be made of the Jesuit-inspired Marian Congregations, which sought to educate the elites in Christian

values, using their offspring to do charitable work among the most deprived sections of the population. However, innovative European initiatives such as holiday camps or specialised Catholic Action movements of the Young Christian Workers type did not come until much later, gaining a strong foothold only in Catalonia, where a renewal movement linked in many respects with nationalism came to the fore and, in the first third of the century up to the outbreak of the Civil War, played an important role in educating the emerging middle classes and disseminating new practices such as sport and hiking (Carrasco 1987; Vila-Abadal 1985). Of particular note was the Federation of Young Christians of Catalonia, which had thousands of followers and experienced the paradox of being persecuted both by some republican circles and by the fascists (Oliveras 1989).

In contrast to this education by the clergy, which sometimes had an anti-modern tinge, there were educational renewal movements which focused on combating illiteracy, extending compulsory schooling and promoting innovative teaching methods, such as the New School Movement, the Free Teaching Institution and the School Institutes (Monés 1987). Other significant initiatives included hygienism (which sought to improve the health of the new generations by promoting, for example, holiday centres in the country or at the seaside) and the Pedagogical Missions (which sought to bring education and culture to rural communities, using cultural media such as mobile libraries, theatre and film). It should be remembered that, at this time, the majority of young people in rural areas did not study but worked as farm hands or apprentices (Lorite 1987; Mayayo 1987).

In the field of education in leisure, the Scout movement became established very quickly, especially in the larger cities. The initial impetus came from members of the armed forces (who founded Exploradores de España, Scouts of Spain, to spread patriotic ideals). In 1913 a Spanish delegation participated in the first major international Scout gathering in Birmingham, England; and Spain was one of the founder members of the international Scout movement in 1922. In 1933 the church promoted a confessional branch, called Scouts Hispanos, which was short-lived. Scouting was also linked with the Montessori, Decroly and Casa de los Niños educational movements and with such concepts as centres of interest, active schooling and custom schooling. It was in Catalonia that it had the greatest impact, in connection with emerging nationalism. The Jovestels de Cataluña, who were linked with the CADCI (a non-manual workers' organisation combining the working-class movement with Catalan nationalism), already had two centres in operation in 1912. In addition to Exploradores de España, branches linked to Catalan nationalism emerged, one confessional, promoted by the writer Folch i Torres, known as Pomells de Joventut (founded in 1920), the other non-religious, including such organisations as Jove Atlàntida (founded in 1923), sponsored by republican and anarchist groups, and the Palestra group (founded in 1930), sponsored by Batista i Roca after his studies in England, and with a pro-independence line. All these branches were banned at the end of the war and did not reappear until well into the post-war period (Serra 1968; Solà 1987).

After the First Federal Republic (1868-72), broad sections of working-class and student youth were attracted to republican and revolutionary ideologies. The new ideas were often associated with young people (Ucelay da Cal 1987). Foremost among these was anarchism, which combined politics with a counter-cultural tradition characterised

by such practices as vegetarianism, the promotion of Esperanto, country outings, co-education, and people's libraries, which were very popular among working-class and rural youth (Tavera 1987). In the socialist and communist camp, social work with young people took the form of pioneer groups modelled on the Soviet Komsomol (Casteràs 1974). Mention should also be made of the youth wing of the populist Radical Party, known as the Jóvenes Bárbaros (young barbarians). During the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-31), a number of conservative patriotic youth movements were formed, but did not have too much impact (Vila-Abadal 1985).

Also worth mentioning is the anti-conscription movement. Compulsory military service was introduced in Spain under the First Republic, although there were quota systems that ensured young people from privileged backgrounds did not have to perform their service – they paid others to go in their place. For young people in rural areas, leaving their community and their family to do three years' military service was a big problem. Furthermore, the colonial wars in Cuba (1898) and Morocco (1911-27) meant that military service was not a game but a dangerous activity, resulting in death for many young people. A large anti-militarist movement emerged in this context. The year 1909 saw popular uprisings against conscription for the Rif War (the "tragic week"). But fugitives and deserters were the most tangible effect in the longer term (Abelló 1987).

All this effervescence resulted in the Second Republic (1931-36), a period experienced by many young people as a new awakening for youth at all levels: political, cultural, artistic and educational (Souto 2007). In Madrid, places such as the Free Teaching Institution and the Student Residence attracted young artists – such as the poet Federico García Lorca, the painter Salvador Dalí and the film-maker Luis Buñuel. In Catalonia, many of these groups became politicised under one or other of the different banners: republicanism, anarcho-syndicalism, socialism, and communism. In many towns and cities, student clubs appeared and livened up the local nightlife, using new musical rhythms such as jazz and swing as the path to modernisation. We should also bear in mind the impact of the artistic avant-garde, which attracted many young artists (Vallcorba-Plana 1987). At the same time, the economic and political crisis foreshadowed a climate of social conflict that would lead eventually to military conflict. For young people making the transition to adulthood during the Civil War, this was an experience of liberation, heightened by the arrival of young people from all over the world to fight in the International Brigades. However, one cannot help but be reminded of their fractured lives. The trauma of war disrupted the patterns of everyday life and the bridges that mark the passage from childhood to full social integration were destroyed:

> Our youth was a bridging generation between here and there. And the river which flows between here and there swallowed some, while others managed to get across. … I think this made us grow up faster. Our young years went by in leaps and bounds. Everything which our childhood and youth should have been, the war took it away. What was traumatic for young people was that people went through the whole war and were then put in concentration camps. And when they came home, they had no work. They had to go on the black market, after being trained by the big black marketeers … Young people suffered the most damage. (Lluís, born in 1921; quoted in Feixa 1991)

The Francoist dictatorship

> A special task falls to those responsible for guiding our young generation, our youth, which has seen such radical changes in its way of life. Who does not remember that group of ragged "pioneers" with its loud demands? Its brazen and confrontational policy positions, its atheistic slogans and foul-mouthed calls for bloody class struggle, its displays of perverse and shameless instincts, have been replaced by a youth imbued with noble ideas and magnanimous ideals, conscious of having come to the world with a specific mission to serve God and our common destiny. (*Clara Voz*, April 1946)

> To put it properly, we would say that the conflict is generational … Many of us wonder where it is all going to stop. If you look at the photo of these angry young people who want to change everything that has been established – although the alternative programme they are offering is pretty poor – you will see how they listen with a look of veneration on their faces to the new long-haired and anarchistic young leaders of today. (*La Mañana*, May 1968)

The above two quotations evoke another two key moments in the attempt to establish a new state-sponsored model of youth work. The first illustrates the new regime's attempt at ideological indoctrination of young people, making a clean break with the past. The second refers to the generational change experienced as a result of the student movement of 1968, when the regime realised that it was losing the nation's youth because of the radical "lifestyle change" that was occurring. The Francoist dictatorship meant a return to political, cultural and religious monolithism. In a context of severe repression, economic insecurity, autarky and international isolation, we saw the rise of a "sceptical generation" which survived with the aim of forgetting the war and becoming adults. At the same time, youth policy became a state policy: the new regime regarded young people as its "favourite project" (Molinero and Ysàs 1987). During this period, we can distinguish between two stages: the post-war years and National Catholicism (1939-59) and late Francoism with the opening up of the economy and the crisis of legitimacy (1959-75).

From the Francoist army's military victory up to the end of the Second World War, the new regime attempted to introduce totalitarian types of youth regimentation similar to those promoted by Italian Fascism – the Barilla – and by German Nazism –the Hitlerjugend (Mir 2007). Initially they were called Franco's Youth Falanges (on the national-socialist model of paramilitary squadrons behind a leader) and used instructors from the Hitlerjugend itself. Then they became "youth organisations" forming the youth section of the single party (the Falange), which incorporated young people from other right-wing organisations (such as Carlism). After the Second World War they were re-formed as the Youth Front – Frente de Juventudes, or FJ for short. The FJ gradually shed its more clearly fascist trappings, although it continued to be a totalitarian organisation (Sáez 1988). The dictator sought to win the hearts of the new generation while educating them in National Catholicism (the Spanish version of National Socialism) and banishing the liberal, republican and socialist ideologies that had prevailed during the Second Republic. The instructors of the FJ – who were trained at academies located in different parts of Spain – were assigned the task of organising indoctrination activities at school ("forming the national spirit", and paramilitary sports such as collective gymnastics) and, above all, leisure-time activities such as so-called summer camps. For this purpose, the regime built a network

of youth facilities: youth hostels, student residences, and camp sites. In parallel to the FJ, special sections were created for women (the Female Section) and students (the Spanish University Syndicate). Although these organisations were supposed to be for all young people, their scope was inevitably limited to the most convinced among them, those who did not have the means to go elsewhere and those who participated on an ad hoc basis in certain recreational activities. From 1959, when the regime opened up the economy, the FJ became the Spanish Youth Organisation, which prioritised leisure-time education and sporting and recreational activities without completely overlooking political training.

Apart from the regime's own youth organisations, the only other bodies authorised in the first two decades of the Franco regime were those which grew up within the Catholic Church, although the least controllable among them – such as the Federation of Young Catalan Catholics (FJCC) and the Catholic Young Workers (JOC) – were initially banned. Within Catholic Action, there was a gradual development of specialised movements – for example, young workers, students, Young Farmers – which, over time, would become the breeding ground for the anti-Franco movement (Carrasco 1987). The Boy Scouts were re-formed in 1948 by Antoni Batlle, and in some places such as Catalonia they also became a setting for the learning of democratic culture (Solà 1987). In the 1960s young people began to mobilise against the regime (Aranguren 1961). Initially it was resistance of a cultural type that was reflected in new lifestyles, new moral values, new musical movements (such as protest songs or modern music) and new artistic movements, foremost among which was the so-called "gauche divine", mainly offspring of the Barcelona upper class devoted to artistic activities such as literature, cinema, architecture or photography. They were all left-wing oriented but not in the traditional way, more in their lifestyle, which included parties in night clubs and holidays in the Catalan coast (Regàs and Rubio 2001). In the vanguard of these movements were students, who had already led a first revolt in 1956 (Mesa 1982) and who, after 1968, turned the campuses of universities into "freedom zones" (Rodríguez 2009). Another noteworthy phenomenon was emigration, both internal (from rural areas to urban areas and from the rural south to the industrialised north) and to other European countries. In the latter case it was promoted by the regime itself through agreements with governments such as those of Germany and Switzerland as a means of obtaining foreign currency and financing the country's economic revival. As a result of this, young people of migrant origin living in the suburbs of large cities were faced with serious problems of housing and social services, leading to a growing social and political awareness (García-Nieto and Comín 1974).

In 1970, Father José María López Riocerezo, a prolific author of "edifying" books for young people, published a study (López Riocerezo 1970) entitled *Problemática mundial del gamberrismo y sus posibles soluciones* (The global problem of hooliganism and possible solutions to it), in which he turned his attention to a whole series of manifestations of youth non-conformism, from delinquency to fashion trends: the *gamberros*, *blousons noirs*, Teddy boys, *vitelloni*, *raggare*, rockers, beatniks, *macarras*, hippies, *Halbstarkes*, *provos*, *yé-yés*, *rocanroleros* and *pavitos*. These were all variants of the same species: the "rebel without a cause". The author started from the premise that hooliganism was one of the most urgent present-day social problems. For him,

the hooligan was nothing more than the Spanish variant of a foreign model which people were trying to import. The Vagrancy Act referred to the danger represented by

> those who insolently and cynically attack the rules of social coexistence through physical aggression or damage to property without there being any reason not merely to justify it but even to explain its origins or purpose. (López Riocerezo 1970:14)

According to López Riocerezo, Spain was faced with a very mild form of the phenomenon. Statistics for 1963 showed that, in Spain, there were only 161 delinquents for every 100 000 inhabitants (as compared with 852 in the United Kingdom, 455 in the United States, 378 in Germany and 216 in Italy):

> Although the disease is universal, its virulence differs from one country to another. In Spain, for example, we have a relatively low rate compared to countries with the same degree of civilisation, due perhaps to historical constants, the weight of the centuries and family traditions, which, as we know, represent baggage which cannot be easily shed. (López Riocerezo 1970: 244)

But he ends by acknowledging that

> although juvenile delinquency rates are lower in Spain than in other European countries … delinquency is the outcome of a set of highly complex effects and causes which are closely interrelated with the change from a rural and agricultural to an industrial and post-industrial society. When this transition happens quickly, a cultural and sociological crisis occurs, closing the channels for the individual's integration into the norms of society. Spain is experiencing a process of this kind … "Yé-yés", "hippies" and their long-haired ilk, and other dissenting young people, are shouting out against the social and family crisis. (ibid.: 269)

The other trend in youth rebellion was counter-cultural (Feixa and Porzio 2005). In 1969, the journalist Jesús Torbado published *La Europa de los jóvenes*, a book dedicated to a description of European youth in the 1960s (Torbado 1969). Torbado was a journalist who had already defined himself in other articles as a defender of youth against the clichés and classifications which society customarily used to refer to them. His aim was to describe the reality and to make known the youth movements that were of such concern to adult society. *La Europa de los jóvenes* was the fruit of the author's first-hand experiences with the most representative youth groups of the time in European capital cities. There were three main prior assumptions. First, western societies, caught up in the progress of industrialisation and the new consumer society, were undergoing radical changes in their traditional forms of organisation and values. Second, young people felt out of place, deprived of family and educational support, and, third, the majority of young people were totally apolitical. For Torbado, adult society, institutions and families were those guilty of the acts of hooliganism which they attributed to young people, who, moreover, were confused with those he calls "adolescents". Young people were responsible human beings who studied or worked. Those guilty of misbehaviour were those he defines as adolescents. European youth cultures are described from a positive perspective, with emphasis placed on the creativity which young people displayed in their words and acts. He says that when the hippy or beatnik lifestyles arrived in Spain, they were stripped of

their substance. Everything that was avant-garde about hippies in the United States, for example, became mere fashion:

> The new youth trends have indeed come to Spain, but only the more laughable aspects are left and the element of seriousness which they contain has gone by the board … The rebels are not the trendy millionaires who drive 850 coupés, the fake hippies, the well-healed young gentlemen with long hair, the sophisticated musicians or the girls in miniskirts. All of these are part of the new bourgeoisie, much more traditionalist than is claimed … Who are the young people who actually live in their time, i.e. in 1968, who discuss new ideas, put them into practice or reject them, who live in the real world far from appearances which are more sophisticated than philosophical, more formal than fundamental? … Spain's real new generation is at university, in the factories or in the fields; in other words, it works and does flaunt itself. (Torbado 1969: 159-60)

The final years of the Franco regime saw a dual trend among young people (Colomer 1987). On the one hand, the new generations became politicised, swelling the ranks of the republican parties' youth sections (socialist, communist, nationalist and Christian Democrat youth), new-style, more radical formations (such as the Young Red Guard of Spain) and even terrorist groups (ETA, FRAP). The death sentences imposed on some young militants (such as ETA members and Salvador Antich) acted as a spur to these movements. On the other hand, social work of a voluntary and co-operative nature in local communities became institutionalised, usually sponsored by the youth committees of residents' associations, parish assemblies or underground trade unions, thus foreshadowing the "street work" that would develop with the advent of democracy: the struggle for better living conditions alongside the more marginalised young people became a fight for democracy (Reguant and Castillejo 1976).

The democratic transition

> To a greater or lesser extent, we all imagine that we know who the "drop-outs" are. We all "know" that they reject the system. We all "know" that they take drugs, that they are bad people, that they even steal and are dirty; in short, we all know what the authorities want us to know about them. Because the authorities take external and superfluous aspects of the dropout mentality and caricature them in order to discredit them, making us believe that they are its essence and substance … But the basic question lies in the rejection of all ways of life imposed by the system. The system exploits us and forces us to consume what we produce, although it is unnecessary and even harmful to us; it forces us to play a role and to adjust to it, without deviating from it. ("Pasotismo y pasotas", *Demà*, April 1979)

> The recession was affecting us disproportionately as young people and we were starting to glimpse a very uncertain future, if not actually one of exclusion. Some sections of the media called us the "lost generation" or the "neither-nor generation". I did not see it like that. At the age of 23, I am a "both person", both studying and working. (VV.AA 2011: 24-5)

In Spain we can say that the tradition of youth work as the institutionalisation of work with young people began with the transition to democracy in the 1970s. Under Franco, youth work had been linked to religious actions sponsored by the Catholic Church. Starting from the democratic transition, however, youth work began to

be noticed and to be regarded as an important policy area. Article 48 of the 1978 Constitution says:

> The public authorities shall promote conditions directed towards the free and effective participation of young people in political, social, economic and cultural development.

The Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE) was founded in 1977. It was restructured in 1985 to become the type of organisation it is now, attached to the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. Although powers relating to youth matters lie with the autonomous communities, INJUVE does have some important responsibilities – co-ordinating and running youth information services and youth mobility programmes, such as Youth in Action, and co-ordinating volunteer activities via the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations. The Spanish Youth Council was founded in 1983 to promote youth participation in the cultural, economic, social and political spheres. All the autonomous communities and Spanish youth organisations are represented on this body. The International Year of Youth in 1985 was a milestone for youth work because it was the year in which public youth policies took off. In Spain, responsibility for youth policy currently lies with the autonomous communities, the decentralisation structures created after the dictatorship to deal with the claim of regions with a strong nationalistic background, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country. Specifically, the process of transferring powers began in Catalonia in 1980 and ended in 1989 in the other regions. Although overall responsibility lies with the autonomous communities, the local and provincial authorities also have some youth-related responsibilities and usually have a department for youth that, in some cases, covers other policy areas too. Youth policies became standard practice in the 1990s. That decade saw the consolidation of a network of youth organisations mainly funded by the public authorities, and it was also in that decade that educational work with young people began to develop as a result of the professionalisation of social education and social services. Given the current economic recession and the resulting cuts in public funding, many youth associations and youth departments set up in the various public authorities during the 1990s are now at risk of being disbanded as a result of lack of funds, with all that this entails in terms of a weakening of youth work (European Commission 2014).

Youth work is not officially recognised as a profession in Spain. Some youth work activities have involved a wide range of professionals (social workers, social educators and community development workers). The employment conditions for these workers depend on the authority employing them and the importance they attach to youth work. These professionals usually work in the youth departments of the autonomous communities, local authority youth departments and provincial social services departments. Some municipalities have "youth houses" where mainly recreational and educational activities are organised for young people of different ages. This suggests that the lack of a professional status for youth work is due to the low level of political commitment to promoting its real professionalisation. In some autonomous communities these workers have formed associations to highlight the importance of work with young people, such as the Association of Youth Technicians in Catalonia. It would indeed be necessary to create a specific "youth work" qualification in formal education in order to draw attention to the importance of activities with

this section of the population at a time when young people are being particularly hard hit by the effects of the recession. There have been some Spanish universities offering postgraduate programmes focused on youth work and/or youth policy and research, but nowadays only one masters degree still exists in Catalonia. The lack of recognition and the high fees discourage future youth workers. Many youth workers, particularly those working in municipalities, have acquired their skills in the voluntary sector, in NGOs devoted to education in leisure time such as the Scouts or similar, and trained in courses provided by these kinds of organisations. In 2011, the Spanish Qualifications Framework incorporated a new qualification concerning the promotion of free-time activities for children and young people, but at level 2 (vocational training) and with little effect on youth work training.

Youth policies in Spain have been influenced by the notion of youth as a transitional stage. Youth has been defined in youth-related research basically as a stage of transition to and integration with the sphere of adult responsibilities (Casal, Merino and Garcia 2011). This explains why, historically, youth policies have been formulated in linear terms and have been geared essentially to training, employment and housing, without this having entailed any substantial improvement in young people's life opportunities (Bayón 2009; Moreno Mínguez 2012). As well illustrated by Comas (2007), youth policies in Spain have been formulated on the basis of this conception of youth as a finite, transient stage. However, as may be seen from the constitutional framework, youth policies should be cross-sectoral and designed to promote citizen participation, although they have generally been seen as transitional policies. In fact, we could say that the indeterminate nature of youth policies in Spain has led to a plurality of ambiguous youth policies in local authorities and the autonomous communities, whose policies have basically involved drawing up youth programmes and organising recreational and educational activities for young people. It should be noted that there are also more universalistic policies, like those drawn up in the various ministries, linked to training, employment or the family, which impact on young people's transition processes. Paradoxically, although these policies are the ones that have the greatest impact on young people's living conditions and opportunities, often they are not regarded as youth policies, and those which are actually conceived as youth policies focusing on leisure aspects and participation receive only peripheral attention (Casal 2002).

However that may be, youth policies have mainly adopted a generational approach. Policies aimed at specific groups of young people are hard to find, with the notable exception of those aimed at young people with disabilities, young people belonging to ethnic minorities such as Roma and, to a lesser extent, young immigrants. The main target groups are unemployed young people who have abandoned their studies and young people with disabilities. However, young immigrants do not appear to be an established policy area. This ambiguity of youth policies is reflected in studies on youth work in Spain (European Union–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, 2006, 2009). One example of this is the absence of a specific "youth" line of research in national research and development plans. Although we do not seem to have specific studies on youth work, there are some reference publications dealing indirectly with the subject, such as the youth reports produced by INJUVE every four years since 1985. This body is also responsible for the Youth Review that is widely distributed

in Spain. Attention should also be drawn to the youth reports produced since 1982 by the Fundación Santa María, and to the periodic statistical reports produced by the Spanish Youth Council, among many others.

The recession has affected Spanish youth in various ways. The best known is the high rate of youth unemployment in Spain and another that is less well known but has major social repercussions is the new social and political activism triggered by the recession. The day of protest on 15 May 2011 (the 15-M movement) was a landmark in the mobilisation of young people and contributed both to greater visibility for youth movements and to a rethinking of policies on youth and youth work. Although, as already mentioned in this section, Spain does not have a specific youth work policy, the economic crisis and the youth movements and platforms which emerged from 15-M have in a way enhanced the institutional role of youth work. According to Tejerina (2010), the Spanish party-political system is to some extent the legacy of the bi-party system of the democratic transition, just as Spain's social movements are the legacy of the Franco regime's cultural policy (delegitimisation of certain forms of protest). However, the economic crisis and the 15-M movement have given rise to new, not strictly institutionalised forms of youth mobilisation such as the re-emergence of the anti-Bologna student movement, the "Youth without a future" movement, the various anti-eviction platforms and the many other forms of action which can be seen in various local areas. For the youth social movements which emerged after 15-M, social networks and the internet are crucial for organising debate, mobilisation and social and political participation (Castells 2012; Gil García 2012). For example, the youth-led "We're not leaving, they're kicking us out" campaign was promoted by means of videos, graphic designs and interactive work on social networks, mainly Facebook and Twitter, and was very successful in terms of youth participation and mobilisation. In the Spanish context, marked by a protracted recession, insecure living conditions for young people and a high degree of disaffection with the traditional structures of social, economic and political life, we are seeing the emergence of new dissident forms of social and political mobilisation in which young people play a major role. These alternative forms of participation exist side by side with the traditional forms of social and political participation. It is precisely the nation's institutions that must find a response to the precarious situation of young people through active employment policies that up to now have not achieved their objectives. It remains to be seen how the European Youth Guarantee scheme, to which a large budget has been allocated in each country and whose aim is to guarantee jobs or alternatives in education and training for young people in the first few months after obtaining a qualification, will translate into life opportunities for young people. The labour market integration of young people under decent conditions could be a first step towards reducing the high levels of political disaffection among them and restoring confidence in institutions as a form of social cohesion and structuring.

Conclusion

To conclude this brief review of the history of youth work in Spain, we feel it would be appropriate to outline, briefly again, the three major challenges with which youth policies in the broad sense are confronted.

The first is to improve living conditions and opportunities for young people. The prevailing view of youth as a transitional stage has to be seen in the context of the recurring economic crises that have made it difficult for many generations to enter the labour market and consolidate a social, professional and family status. To a European observer, the situation of Spanish youth would seem explosive, but we have two safeguards, the family and school. Spain is a clear example of a family-oriented welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 2002). The age at which young people leave the parental home has risen steadily (currently the average age is 29 to 30), which shows that the family is helping, as it always has, to cushion the effects of the recession. One of the effects of the latest economic crisis has been an increase in enrolment in secondary education, especially vocational education, either as a reskilling strategy (the most optimistic view) or as a delaying strategy (the most negative view). It remains to be seen what impact the new EU Youth Guarantee scheme will have. It does not appear to be very innovative in relation to previous schemes based on training and bonuses for hiring young people, but it may at least mark a new trend in fiscal adjustment policies and policies to streamline the welfare state (Cabasés and Pardell 2014).

The second challenge is to legitimise channels for sociopolitical participation. We have gone from authoritarian structures with fascist tendencies to democratic structures that are, however, not entirely free from paternalism. A recurring argument in present-day political debate in Spain is that young people did not vote for the 1978 Constitution (technically, all those born since 1958), and it is seen as a product of the older generation that is often useless for meeting the new demands. There was a lot of talk in the 1980s about young people's disaffection with politics, admittedly from the idealised perspective of the young people who fought the Franco regime. But the last few years have seen a new "engagement", a renewed interest in politics which is not necessarily or mainly pursued through institutions, but has not given up the idea of changing them either. It remains to be seen whether these new "bottom-top" strategies will fit in with, transform or translate into "top-down" strategies.

The third is the professionalisation of youth work. In its most militant form, the voluntary sector played a very important part in the fight against Francoism, but it remained important during the democratic transition, partly as a result of the failure to establish a strong welfare state comparable to those of neighbouring countries. As well as being weak, the welfare state was focused on the areas that enjoyed the greatest social consensus (and, more cynically, provided the best electoral returns), such as education and health, leaving very little room for marginal issues such as youth or culture. It was in social services that there were major developments. We may consider that a milestone was reached, first in 1992 with the creation of university social studies courses, which contributed to the process of professionalising the sector, and a few years later with the creation of professional schools of social studies, although the main focus of social educators is work with children, adolescents and young people in situations of social risk. But it is also true that professionalisation has meant introducing a certain amount of bureaucracy, which, among other things, has turned young people into users of services. The weakness of public policies also had a lot to do with the transformation of the voluntary sector into a "third sector": the inadequacy of public funding meant a loss of job security for social services

professionals. Lastly, it seems that one – albeit difficult – objective to achieve would be to improve the working conditions of youth workers and their training, as well as ensuring that young people are not solely dependent on welfare, be it public or administered by not-for-profit organisations, or pursuing something which has already become a catchphrase: youth empowerment (Richez et al. 2012).

Although some authors have predicted the slow decline of youth work in Spain, and even its disappearance, as one of the pernicious effects of so-called "austerity policies" (Comas 2007; Soler, Planas and Feixa 2014), at the very time when the period of youth is stretching to unimagined limits and when conditions of social hardship and vulnerability are no longer confined to marginalised sectors, youth work is more necessary today than ever – not as an external resource provided by the adult world or the state, but as one of the "social skills" which young players should learn to use in order to become adults (although in a very different way from their great-grandparents a century before).

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