# PANORAMA
## INSIGHTS INTO ASIAN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

# YOUTH
## Future Agents of Change or Guardians of Establishment?

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# Preface

The "Pirates" is a new political movement that had first been formed in Sweden and emerged in different European countries. Initially, the new movement was supported mainly by young people. Preservation of civil rights on the internet and opposition to the so-called data retention policies of the European Union have been main drivers for the creation of this movement. Issues of concern for these parties are information privacy, i.e., the rejection of the collection and storage of personal data by government agencies, reforms of copyright, education, the handling of genetic patents and drug policies. They promote the enhanced transparency of government by implementing "open-source government", and they want to facilitate the creation of an open architecture for sharing content and data between communities and applications in the internet.

In Germany, the "Pirates" converted into a political party in 2006. Since 2011, they have been winning parliamentary representation each time they participate in an election. Now they are represented in four regional parliaments of Federal States. As national polls show, they have for now quite a stable support of between 8 to 12% of the national electorate. Therefore, it is very probable that "the Pirates" will gain (or "enter", as they express it) a good number of seats in the national parliament after the next general elections of 2013. Then, eventually, "the Pirates" will even influence the building of the next federal government, because the success of this new political party can make it impossible to build a two-party-coalition government in the traditional way.

Why do I tell the story of the "Pirates" and their political success in Germany? Because this issue of *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs* is about youth and politics. In the last few years, we can observe in different parts of the world new ways and expressions of political activism and engagement by young people. The "Pirates" is only one phenomenon beside others. The "occupy movement" is another one. As an international protest movement against economic and social inequality, it seems to have an even stronger international character than the "Pirates". However, like those, it also gained relevance because of the support of young people. Needless to say, the use of social media has been extremely relevant for the spreading of this movement; as it has been for others, like the anti-corruption movements in Latin America and Asia; the protests of school pupils and university students in Chile against the government's education policy, which gained worldwide attention; and not least, the so-called "Arab Spring", the uprising of broad popular movements against authoritarian governments in the countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Young people were at the forefront of these anti-government protest, as they have been in the forefront of all the other movements mentioned above.

Youth movements can challenge national governments and build strong national and even international actors. They may not represent, at least at a first glance, a

majority. However they are an expression of the changes and demands of an important sector of societies. With decreasing employment opportunities in many countries, a large mass of frustrated youth is likely to become a potential source of social and political instability. While this kind of frustration and competition for jobs does not directly fuel violence, it does increase the likelihood that these unemployed youths will seek social and economic advancement by alternative means and that they will look for alternative forms of political participation and representation.

Youth are the nation builders of tomorrow and their participation in politics and society is integral for development. By harnessing the talent of youth, nations can build a lasting foundation for prosperity. The future belongs to the youth and society should do their part to involve them. Therefore, we should be interested in all those affairs that affect youth and make it politically active. This is the reason why we dedicate this issue of our journal to the youth. We have tried to present a wide range of topics about youths' perceptions and behaviour in Asia and Europe. Perhaps this material can contribute to discussions on effective policies to offer the young people new opportunities in changing societies.
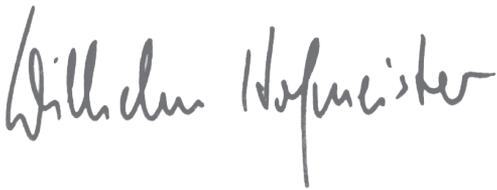
Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister
Regional Director

# ASIA

# Youth Political Participation in Asia: Outlooks in Malaysia and Indonesia

*Rashila Ramli*

## Introduction

The presence of youth in all society is a cause for celebration. The presence signifies the continuation of future generation in all realms of life. More importantly, the cohort provides states and societies with energy of creativity, and skills. The involvement of youth in all spheres of life becomes imperative especially for developing countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia in Southeast Asia.

While one celebrates the boundless energy associated with youthfulness, one can also become apprehensive in trying to understand youth in one's own society. Today's youth grow up with more information, attachment to technological gadgets, and the belief in themselves that they can influence events around them. The participation of youth in a number of national uprisings such as the Arab Spring indicates the activism of youth within the public sphere. What are some of the global trends in terms of youth studies? What are youth perspectives on issues, especially in politics and decision-making? Are youth agents of change or consumerist in nature? How do youth use the social media in political engagement?

This paper attempts to identify factors influencing youth's political participation. Using the Malaysian and Indonesian examples, it will highlight findings of recent youth studies. On a more substantive note, this paper suggests that youth of Malaysia and Indonesia view politics differently and that social media does play an important role in their lives.

## Approaches to Youth Studies

Youth will be the next generation of policy makers, innovators and workers. A number of studies have been conducted in order to understand the needs of youth, their political perspectives and well as their sociological/psychological well-being. How does one frame the study on youth?

In a study by Gilliam and Bales (2001), it is shown that the concept of framing, especially through the media, tends to problematize youth as a group with excessive tendencies and highlight incidents pertaining to sexuality and risk-taking. Once problematic images and youth become an acceptable "paired-up", it becomes difficult to discern the positive attributes of youth. Cullen and Wright (2002), on the other hand, manage to compile an impressive list of indicators that debunk the problematic images of youth. A recent study by Hazita Azman, Bahiyah Abdul Hamid and Zarina Othman (2011) provides a different perspective in the study of youth. In a compilation of work, the authors indicate that it is important to understand youth by looking at the linkages between the global and the local. Glocalization, i.e. the ability to be grounded in the local setting but having a global application and reach, provides an alternative lens in studying youth. This paper focuses on the linkages between local and global factors in an attempt to understand youth political participation in Asia, especially Malaysia and Indonesia.

Within the political sphere, there are many forms of political participation. Generally, one can participate by being active in political parties or in events organized by political parties. As citizens who are 18 or 21 years old, youth can exercise their rights to vote in General Elections and By–Elections. However, political participation must be seen in a broader manner. Citizens have various spaces to participate in the age of advance technology, increased civil awareness and the blurring of public-private boundaries.

There are many factors that can influence the political participation of a person. Some of the factors are political socialization by family, friends and the school system, media agenda setting, and personal experience. External factors include possible emulation of political activism from outside the country and globalizing ideas on the need for political reforms. However, there are also studies in different regions of the world that have shown that levels of participation can be almost non-existent due to apathy towards politics (Hart, 1992; Hayes, 1998). The continuum of political participation provides valuable indicators in order to gauge the level of political awareness of citizens, including youth. Another possible indicator is the political orientation. In this case, the leaning from conservatism to liberalism in terms of thoughts and actions tends to be the orientation associated with political activities.

This paper assumes that youth are a competent lot and worthy of the commitment of resources. Youth can be agents of change or co-constructors of society. In 2011, youth constitutes a population of approximately 1.5 billion, of which 1.3 billion are living in developing countries. Studies by the East-West Center (2002) show a number of trends associated with Asian youth between the ages of 14-24. Three trends associated with these youth are: many youth are marrying later, many are staying in school longer and more or less, most youth are likely to have a job. The implication of these trends has a bearing in risk-taking behavior as mentioned by Gilliam and Bales. There is a

greater possibility of sexual risk-taking, an increase in smoking, drinking and drug usage, as well as an increase in early child-bearing. Despite the above depiction of trends and risk-taking behavior, youth are also proving to be innovators and entrepreneurs. However, the role of youth in politics can be seen to be fluid due to the different political systems within Asia, the availability of political space and the attitudes of youth towards politics. Asia is a region that can be better understood by dividing into several sub-regions such as West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia. Since it is impossible to give adequate coverage to all regions, I will concentrate on Southeast Asia, which has a large population of Muslim youth whose trends of thoughts especially in politics can influence future political outlooks. The next section of this paper will focus on the political attitudes of Malaysian and Indonesian youth.

## Southeast Asian Youth: Malaysian and Indonesian Context

On July 11, 2011, the Goethe Institute in cooperation with the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON) and the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) hosted the launch of surveys conducted in Malaysia and Indonesia entitled Values, Dreams, Ideals: Muslim Youth in Southeast Asia. The Muslim Youth Survey 2011 is meant to be the beginning of a periodic poll. The collection of this baseline data took place in both countries in the months of October and November 2010 where 1060 people aged 15-25 were surveyed in Malaysia and 1496 in Indonesia.

Why Indonesia and Malaysia? Indonesia, with 200 million Muslims (88% of its total population) combined with the 16 million Muslims in Malaysia (60% of its total population) constituted the largest Muslim population in the world. While focus is on the development of the Arab Spring, the development of Muslim youth in a region which is culturally and linguistically different from those in West Asia can shed light on pertinent issues concerning their personal development, family orientation, social environment, religion, politics and social environment. Historically, the Malay Archipelago saw a free movement between the islands of what is now known as Indonesia and the peninsula of Malaysia and the Borneo Islands (constituting the state of Sabah, Sarawak and the Kalimantan). While Malaysia upholds a constitutional monarchy and has a prime minister, Indonesia is a presidential republic elected directly by the people every five years. Both countries have two chambers of parliament. Youth in Malaysia can vote at the age of 21, while Indonesian youth can go to the polls once they turn 17 years old.

The results from the Malaysian youth survey indicates that at a personal level, Malaysian youth have not exercised their voting rights and do exhibit a rather apathetic view relating to political participation through political parties. They believe that there is a need for strong opposition in order to provide the desired check and balance within the government. In terms of leadership, while 86.1% indicates that "a good democracy

needs opposition parties", 67.5% do believe that a woman can become a good leader of the country. There is also an indication that Malaysian Muslim youth are willing to have religious leaders replace politicians in the governance of the country. From the findings, two major issues which are apparent in the thoughts and practices of this group concerns Islamic conservatism (social and political), and political in-activism. While they tend to have strong conservative tendencies in their thoughts, there seems to be inconsistency in term of actual practices. While they have strong beliefs in God and fate, they do not fully practice the rituals of the religion, nor do they go to the mosque on a regular basis. Instead, they prefer watching television, communicating through the internet, and being active in groups other than political parties. More importantly, the Muslim youth of Malaysia do not condone violence as a political strategy in trying to solve problems within the society. They value peace, economic opportunity, and freedom of expression. One can argue that this juxtaposition comes into place because of the pressure and freedom that these youth experience growing up in Malaysia (Muslim Youth Survey 2011). One can argue that the pressure comes from the constant reminder by socialization agents such parents, religious leaders, the mainstream media, and teachers on the way that they should be thinking and acting. However, the availability of information through modern technology gives them many fruits for thought, and a sense of interconnectedness with the rest of the world. Free access to information is very much valued by all.

With 88% of the population being Muslims, the perspectives and outlooks of Indonesian youth deserve our attention especially in the areas of personal political activism, thoughts on leadership, and the state of the nation. In the case of personal political activism, there is a clear difference between rural and urban youth of Indonesia. The rural youth plays a more direct involvement in the political process compared to their urban counterpart. However, the general lack of enthusiasm for politics is confirmed by the fact that only 42% have exercised their voting rights. With respect to political leadership, 63.2% believe that the country's development is on the right track, but the existence of practical politics as practiced by impatient politicians is tarnishing the governance of the state. Indonesian youth do believe that women can be leaders in society, and that religious leaders should not replace politicians. In terms of the state of the nation, there is a strong belief in democratic practices, where more than 70% believe that people have the power to change the current government if the politicians are not performing well. It is also interesting to note that unlike in Malaysia, the Indonesian youth believe that the Pancasila should not be replaced by the Al-Quran as the governing charter of the country. From the above observation and further findings, it is important to note that there seems to be a positive correlation between social control and ritual practices of the religion. The Indonesian youth places great importance in their Islamic beliefs; however, if social control exist, then they will be more likely

to perform the daily religious rituals. Indonesian youth regard themselves as Muslims first, then Indonesians.

In a comparative manner, both Malaysian and Indonesian youth do show concern for the political development in their respective country. Both indicate that a strong democratic system does require the existence of a good opposition; however, the level of political participation in both countries is rather limited. An area of concern is the fact that both Malaysian and Indonesian youth are willing to have Hudud Law implemented in the country. This is revealed when 51.5% of youth in Malaysia, and 47% in Indonesia agreed to the statement that "cutting off hands as punishment for thieves" are acceptable. However, if one were to scrutinize the data closely, one can also conclude that the Indonesian youth are not as conservative as the Malaysian youth. There is a higher percentage of Indonesian youth who do not profess strong conservative ideas relating to the wearing of the headscarves, pre-marital sex, or marrying someone from a different religion. This relative openness to a broader spectrum of ideas can be due to the fact that there is a deeper understanding and interpretation of Islam in Indonesia. The existence of scholars from many schools of Islamic thought and the lack of social control provide Indonesian youth with many options of understanding the religion. It is in Indonesia where one can find Muslims having lunch in public during Ramadan. It is also in Indonesia where *Wisata Libido* (sexual tourism) has its own organized structure within the society, although the slow creep of conservatism is impacting on the organization in the recent years. The high level of acceptance and tolerance of diversity and belief systems is apparent in the most populous Muslim country in the world. On the other hand, Malaysian youth have to contend with limited availability of progressive religious thinkers while subjugated to the continuous political ploys of both UMNO and PAS in their eagerness to promote Islam. Although Malaysian youth believe in their own religiosity, studies and documentary films have documented the fact that generally, they do not have in-depth knowledge of the religion. Thus, the level of conservatism is shown to be higher among Malaysian youth as compared to their Indonesian contemporaries.

## Modern Technology and Political Engagement

In the future, states, political parties and civil societies must engage youth political participation through modern technology (Kahn, 2007). The internet provides the space for the inculcation of participatory culture, political consumerism and civic engagement. Participatory culture in politics promotes four points. First, it allows for the advancement of democratic values such as openness, consent and accountability. Second, it helps to build citizenship skills by providing youth with political information leading towards better political problem solving. Third, the internet can lead towards political mobilization—examples in both the Korean and Japanese elections. Finally, it can help to forge a more liberal or progressive politics.

It shows that ICT provides an alternative space for the development of a participatory culture in politics. In 2001, there were only 114,304,000 internet users in Asia. This number has increased to 1,016,799,079 as of March 2011. Within a ten-year span, over 25% of the 4 billion people in Asia have been using the internet.

## Asia Top Internet Countries
### March 31, 2011



| Country | Millions of Users |
|---|---|
| China | 477.0 |
| India | 100.0 |
| Japan | 99.2 |
| Indonesia | 39.6 |
| Korea, South | 39.4 |
| Philippines | 29.7 |
| Vietnam | 27.9 |
| Pakistan | 20.4 |
| Thailand | 18.3 |
| Malaysia | 16.9 |
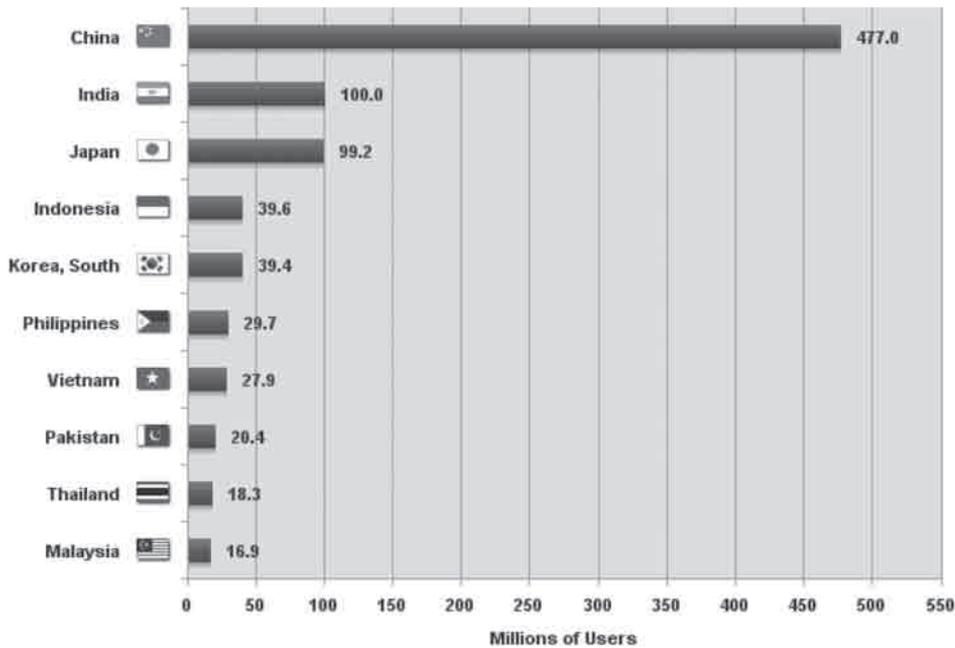
Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm
2,095,006,005 Internet users in the World estimated for 2011Q1
Copyright © 2011, Miniwatts Marketing Group

One must acknowledge the fact that there are other realms of political engagement that can lead toward a momentum for change. Youth utilize ICT to the maximum capacity. The social media has provided space for activism. In the Muslim Youth Survey (2011), youth in both Indonesia and Malaysia received much information through the television and the internet. In a study undertaken by Syed Arabi Idid, Abdul Rashid Moten and Saodah Wok (2011), the researchers focused on the amount of attention given to current news and political news, as well as to the extent of youth political participation in Malaysia. Findings indicate lack of interest in political news as well political activities. However, in terms of practice, the Malaysian youth did indicate that if one continues to vote in elections, one might be able to change something within the political system thus contributing to national politics through active political participation. More importantly, they also collaborated the fact that ICT plays a major role in their lives.

The technological savvy of Malaysian youth has seen a growth in the utilization of Facebook, Twitter and Skype as means to exchange political views.

## Conclusion

The political participation of youth is a field of study that has been gaining popularity in the Social Sciences. The subject is better informed when one takes an interdisciplinary approach to the matter, such as the fields of sociology, psychology, cultural studies and mass communications. In doing so, one can shed light in getting a better understanding on factors influencing youth participation, in this case, in Asia. Asia is a large geographical region with diversity in ethnicity, languages, customs, religions and political systems. In the globalized world, the Asian population, especially the Asian youth, sees both opportunities and challenges.

What is in store for the future? The assumption stated at the beginning of this paper sees youth as an asset and as co-constructors of society. In the case of Malaysia and Indonesian Muslim youth, while they are not actively participation in politics through the conventional manner, they hold strong beliefs in democratic values such as openness, accountability and involvement. Youth are also influenced by many internal and external factors, mainly to various agents of socialization, including politics. Despite creeping conservatism in the minds of some youth, they do not believe that violence is an acceptable method to solve a problem. They received news from the television, but remain connected through the internet. The virtual space has provided room for freedom of expression, the development of citizenship skills, and political mobilization. They find their voices, and use their voices through the internet. In the future, the way to increase youth political participation is by engaging them through various mediums of interaction, especially within the cyber space. More importantly, present decision makers must be cognizant of the fact that youth today have greater aspirations than their parents, more information that can be factored into their own decision making process, as well as a deeper conviction that their presence can make a difference in society, one way or another. It is the meeting of expectations that will charter the future.

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# Youth, Politics and Social Media in Southeast Asia: Trends, Events and Implications

*Shobha Vadrevu and Sun Sun Lim*

## Introduction: youth, politics, social media

When Tahrir Square became the symbol of a new era of socially driven political change in January, 2011, it sparked a few major debates, chief among which were the role of social media platforms in enabling revolution (Anderson, 2011; Harb, 2011; Jones, 2011; Shirky, 2011)[1] and the power of the young to effect change (Shahine, 2011). While the question of how politically engaged young people are—with or without new media—has yet to be resolved, the notion that new media has the potential to empower youths by enabling them to break out of entrenched hierarchies continues to gain traction as these technologies become more widespread. Social and political commentators have keenly observed the developments in the Middle East, ruminating on the nexus between media, youth and political engagement, and the probabilities of the Arab Spring being replicated elsewhere. Vibrant discussions on this very issue have been ignited around the globe, not least of which in Southeast Asia, a region with a youthful population, rising political activism, thriving economies and growing technology penetration.

While much has already been said about the links between media and political change (Kasoma, 1995; Fiske, 1996), young people and technology (Prensky, 2001; Jenkins, 2006; boyd, 2007; Knobel and Lankshear, 2007; Livingstone, 2008; Ito, 2010) and media and the politicisation of youths (Jenkins et al, 2006; Loader, 2007), it is with the advent of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, and so on that the conflation of youth, politics and media seems to have intensified. This conflation appears to have become the new trope of change in a globalised world that has grown accustomed to seeing widening income disparities and larger numbers of unemployed youth (Morris, 2006), juxtaposed against the paradoxical backdrop of increasing

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[1] There are more scholarly articles appearing in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, but Zeynep Tufekci has written extensively on this issue on her website, http://www.technosociology.org, in a timely and reflective manner.

penetration of internet and social media use, especially amongst the young[2]. While the conflation appears to have predisposed us towards expedient, deterministic theories about the relationship between youth, politics and media, a more nuanced view of how these entities relate to one another would be far more productive. Underlying the complexities of this relationship are issues of citizenship, state-citizen interaction and political participation. Southeast Asia, with its diverse cultural, economic and political complexion, and growing levels of social media penetration, is an interesting case in point that can shed light on how young people in an age of global, regional and national instability might find their notions of citizenship shaped by relationships, interactions and identities that are not only technologically mediated, but constituted as well. This paper explores the relationship between social media and political engagement in Southeast Asia, by first highlighting Internet and social media trends in the region, followed by an analysis of the role played by social media in recent politically significant events against the backdrop of rising social media use especially by the young. The essay will conclude by suggesting the need to take this new configuration of state-citizen relations into account in the conceptualisation of youth citizen identity.

## INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

The following table shows the statistics of Internet and Facebook penetration in Southeast Asia. The latter is an indication of social media penetration, although Facebook is by no means the only social media platform in use[3].

Table 1: Internet and Facebook penetration in Southeast Asia as at 2011

| Country | Number of Internet users | Internet penetration (%) | Number of Facebook users | Facebook penetration (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brunei Darussalam | 318,900 | 79.4 | 234,800 | 58.4 |
| Cambodia | 449,160 | 3.1 | 449,160 | 3.1 |
| Indonesia | 55,000,000 | 22.4 | 41,777,240 | 17.0 |
| Laos | 527,400 | 8.1 | 129,660 | 2.0 |
| Malaysia | 17,723,000 | 61.7 | 12,060,340 | 42.0 |
| Myanmar | 110,000 | 0.2 | NA | NA |
| Philippines | 29,700,000 | 29.2 | 27,033,680 | 26.5 |
| Singapore | 3,658,400 | 77.2 | 2,661,360 | 56.1 |
| Thailand | 18,310,000 | 27.4 | 13,276,200 | 19.9 |
| East Timor | 110,924 | 0.2 | NA | NA |
| Vietnam | 30,516,587 | 33.7 | 3,607,220 | 4.0 |

Source: http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm

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[2]  The website http://www.internetworldstats.com/ provides updated statistics that suffice to give a general impression of world penetration rates.

[3]  Twitter is arguably the next most popular social media platform being used in the region. However, data on Twitter penetration is not as comprehensive as that for Facebook, thus making a discussion of broad trends difficult.

As the data in Table 1 suggests, there is wide variation in Southeast Asia's Internet and Facebook penetration rates which is not unexpected given the region's economic diversity. With their greater investment in ICT infrastructure and education, the more affluent Southeast Asian nations of Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia have higher Internet penetration rates. In terms of the sheer number of Internet users however, populous nations such as Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand are far ahead, indicating that even low Internet penetration rates can translate into large numbers of Internet users, especially in the dense urban regions of these countries where penetration rates are far above national average[4].

While social media is a term that encompasses platforms as disparate as online social networks, blogs, micro-blogs and video- and photo-sharing sites, it is services such as Facebook and Twitter that have garnered the most attention for their use in political discussion, engagement and mobilisation, especially amongst the young. In this regard, data on Facebook penetration in Southeast Asia can provide a broad indication of the spread and adoption of social media in the region. With a few exceptions, Facebook penetration rates roughly mirror Internet penetration rates, suggesting that the use of social media is a natural extension of Internet use, although such a claim would be best based on data that is far more robust.

Notably, with the exception of Myanmar and East Timor, for which no figures are available, all the other countries have some percentage of their population on Facebook. In terms of the sheer number of Facebook users, countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines have sizeable Facebook populations of 41 and 27 million respectively. Even Laos, with the lowest Facebook penetration rate of 2% has, in absolute figures, 129,660 Facebook users. The scale of these online populations offers a glimpse into the potential of social media such as Facebook as a mobilising force and a tool for political engagement.

The primary question then concerns the link between social media and political engagement, especially vis-à-vis youths. How does social media complement, supplement or contravene existing spaces for political discussion and participation for Southeast Asian youths? As cyberspace grows in importance as a zone of engagement, both as a wider public sphere and as a space for individual online expressions of citizenship, how does social media complicate these milieu?

## Critical events and political engagement

Recent events in Southeast Asia show how new media activism builds on the capacity of ICTs for supporting resistance against establishment structures. According to Fama and Tam (2010), the turnaround from widespread support for the main political party,

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[4] See for example Ibrahim et al, 2011, for an analysis of the urban-rural digital divide in Malaysia and attempts to bridge this divide.

Barisan Nasional (BN), to increased support for opposition parties in 2008 in Malaysia was partly due to the Internet. Opposition parties were able to garner support through blogs and alternative new websites. As an indication of the growing influence of social media on the political landscape, BN itself sought to develop an online presence so as to thwart opposition dominance of cyberspace. Notably therefore, while social media alone cannot be credited for the opposition parties' gain in public support, it significantly altered the process of political engagement, with the ruling party establishing more personal and interactive social media channels to communicate with the electorate, rather than relying on predominantly unidirectional, mainstream media platforms (Fama and Tam, 2010).

Similar trends were observed in the General Elections in Singapore in 2011. In the lead-up to the event, online activity across blogs, social media platforms and discussion boards registered a noticeable spike (Soo, 2011). Despite survey evidence that local television news coverage and newspapers had a greater influence on voters, the overall impression was of an online world abuzz with information and opinions that in prior elections had been more muted. Among other factors, political commentators have also attributed the dominant People's Action Party's unprecedented defeat in a major constituency to the anti-establishment buzz online (Tham, 2011). Notably, the Prime Minister expressed the conviction that the party needed to strengthen its presence in cyberspace, and emphasized the need to be "on the same wavelength as the netizens and resonating with the Internet generation" (Lee, 2011), reflecting an awareness of the overall shift in perceptions related to modes of interaction online.

However, as much as the Internet facilitates participation and engagement, there are grey areas that often get buried under utopian projections of a global public sphere. Bohman (2004) concludes that the Internet, while enabling multiple channels for communication and mobilisation, still operates within larger socio-political structures that influence how the technology can be utilised. In Vietnam (Quinn, 2010), for instance, government surveillance of Internet sites has led to reduced postings of a political nature on blogs. Government cyber attacks using bots made some bloggers move their servers outside the country. Many users access the Internet from Internet cafes, and these are closely watched by the state, with many sites blocked in them. Yet efforts to mount resistance continue in cyberspace, with a notable example seen in the civil action over bauxite mining. The site called "Bauxite Vietnam" was set up by three men who opposed a government plan to allow a Chinese company to mine bauxite without regard for the environment. The site attracted millions of hits before it was finally closed down because it represented a threat to state authority.

In Myanmar, social media has also been creatively put to political uses. Some videos of the anti-government protests in 2007 were uploaded to video sharing sites like YouTube and Flickr. This allowed the outside world an unprecedented view of the hitherto isolated territory. Diasporic influences and support in cyberspace have helped to

keep hopes for a democratic Myanmar alive. One such example is the BurmaNet News website[5], which provides "coverage of news and opinions on Burma from around the world"[6]. However, restrictions are firmly in place with strict control of the Internet by the authorities, oppositional websites blocked and access to the Internet severely limited, resulting in the inability by activists to use social media to mobilise the citizenry in any effective show of resistance[7].

Broader societal structures aside, digital technologies are themselves inscribed with technological features that structure, shape and constrain usage, for political purposes and otherwise. Longford (2005) describes the codes that define our use of the Internet as shaping our citizenship in cyberspace by regulating, enabling and inhibiting online behaviour and access to information through subtle processes of enculturation, inducement and coercion. For example, sites like Facebook and Twitter allow individuals to accumulate and articulate a network made up of contacts as nodes, thus enhancing one's mobilising potential. However, because these sites encourage the dynamic interplay between offline identities and online interactions, anonymity is not their main feature, and sharing of information within the network is a given (boyd and Ellison, 2007). As the examples of Vietnam and Myanmar show, this lack of anonymity can put activists and their supporters in danger by bringing them under the direct radar of state surveillance mechanisms.

While the same openness that allows for wider participation also facilitates government surveillance (Cohen, 2008; Morozov, 2011), it is plausible that exposure to wider networks and modes of sociability and participation could be a key driving force in a gradual progression towards democratic awareness (Hardt and Negri, 2004). When young people go online, they are inducted into modes of interaction that may have a significant influence on their political opinions and activity. In Indonesia, for example (Lane, 2010), although there is not much direct influence of social media on the political process, influence is growing outside of it. The connectivity offered by the Internet and social media is mainly tapped upon by activist groups through initiatives such as a Facebook petition (in support of an anti-corruption commission that had come under police attack) that attracted a million supporters, but which did not translate into action on the ground (Lane, 2010). Yet, it would be hasty to conclude that social media

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[5] http://www.burmanet.org/news/

[6] Even the name of the country is controversial, with democracy activists preferring the older name "Burma" over the name imposed by the junta, "Myanmar". The BBC provides a comprehensive explanation here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7013943.stm. The use of the former name in cyberspace arguably foregrounds the tension between the state and its detractors in the public eye, and keeps citizens tuned to the continuing division in political thought.

[7] According to an online news site that operates outside of Myanmar: http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=15620

has no impact in this context because a longer view may be taken of its impact on the developing political consciousness of an increasingly wired population.

Similarly, in Thailand, the Red Shirts (supporters of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra) and their backers used social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter extensively. There was a thirst for immediate information about the crisis that mainstream media could not provide (Carthew, 2010). Interestingly, Thaksin's avid use of Twitter led to the unrest being labelled "Thaksin's Twitter Revolution", helping to raise awareness about a hitherto little-known platform. This example points to the important role of individual actors in activating the democratising influence of social media[8]. A similar experience was observed in the Philippines where Presidential candidates Aquino and Villar were social media-savvy politicians who used Facebook effectively in the 2010 election (Espina-Letargo, 2010). Facebook was used not only to mobilise existing supporters, but also to garner new supporters, especially among the youth. Significantly, after the elections, social media was used as a tool for public consultation and citizen journalism, demonstrating its long term impact in changing the way the state engages its citizens.

In sum, bearing in mind structural and technological constraints, it would be fair to say that social media allows for many more people to be engaged in the political process. This is aided in part by the relatively low entry barriers that social media impose. Arguably, sharing a link to an online news article on Facebook, and tweeting or retweeting a brief statement or useful link on Twitter is a far less intellectually demanding way to engage in social commentary than writing an elaborated opinion if one lacks the wherewithal to do so. It is also harder for governments to regulate online social networks as networks span different countries. With its characteristic flattening of hierarchies (Bennet, 2008), social media leads to blurred boundaries between offline and online, private and public, individual and community (Baym, 2009). Ultimately, this potential for sharing within and across online social networks could contribute to the development of a politically engaged young citizenry. As the largest and most active group of social media users in the country, young people are in a prime position to shape and be shaped by the evolving political climate.

## Conclusion: the digital divide and youth citizenship

Young people in Southeast Asia are citizens of cyberspace as well as their nations and the overlapping cultures they inhabit. As members of online and offline communities, they traverse multiple spaces and come into contact with modes of interaction that are sometimes complementary and often contradictory. From learning how to use the

[8]  Sreekumar and Vadrevu (2012) analyse key Twitter accounts and tweets during the General Election in Singapore, and find that two accounts in particular played an important role in framing political discussions on Twitter, using specific discursive strategies to increase their influence.

technical features to exploring how to actively engage in social interaction while navigating online risks and opportunities, young people develop skills of engagement that lend themselves to politicisation.

Yet it would be myopic to consider the potential of social media without taking stock of the grim reality of access inequalities. Returning to the markedly varied penetration rates highlighted above, we need to question whether these inequalities mean that youth are somehow disempowered and politically marginalised if they do not have access to the Internet and to social media. While there is a great deal of literature concerning the digital divide, this divide has come to be seen as an oversimplified representation of the inequalities on the ground (Selwyn, 2004) with solutions in the form of providing ICTs to "have-nots" coming under fire for lacking contextual validity, exacerbating existing divides and creating new ones (Sreekumar, 2011). This is not to say that the digital divide does not exist. Eubanks (2011) posits that the problem lies in the focus on access. Arguing that we are "trapped in a distributive paradigm that understands high-tech equity only in terms of the availability of information products and resources" (p. 24), she recommends an attempt to make "the complex inequalities of the information age visible" (p. 25).

Indeed, focusing on social media alone in the discussion of youth political engagement hides very real and pressing issues of technological marginalisation. Even in an economically advanced country like Singapore, not everyone is empowered to deal with the technologies that are often imposed upon them in the form of e-governance initiatives and surveillance mechanisms, to name just two. The high penetration rate hides the fact that there is a disparity in the level and types of digital skills that different young citizens possess (Cheong, 2008). Citizenship education in many Southeast Asian countries (Kennedy et al, 2010) is based on territorial rootedness and loyalty to the nation, without taking into account the complex and intersecting spheres that many young people are already citizens of. The problematic definition of the nation state in the digital age (Everard, 2000) has not been factored into the project of shaping the young as political beings. Given that significant numbers of young citizens inhabit and are impacted by multiple spheres, and that these numbers are rising every day, it seems necessary to devote some attention to the role played by the technologies that mediate and even constitute the lived realities of young citizens. It is evident that social media is now interwoven with political change, even in countries that have access issues and serious national income inequalities in which differential access is rooted. The resultant nexus of youth, social media and politics is compelling, and suggests that it is imperative to examine the multiple spheres of citizenship young people inhabit.

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# Youth Migration and Development in Asia

*Jorge V. Tigno*

## Introduction: Asian Youth in the Vortex of Globalization

The challenges facing Asia's youth today are as complex and severe as their contributions to the region are important and extensive. The profound demographic, social, economic, and political transformations Asia has experienced in the last three decades has impacted not only significantly but also 'forcefully' on the region's young-age population (Hugo 2006: 1). The forcefulness of globalization in Asia has stirred every level of human existence and young people now find themselves in the middle of this vortex. One major aspect of this vortex can be found in the mobility of people from, within, and beyond Asia. Global forces have combined and contributed to remarkable levels of cross-border mobility among Asia's young.

Why has migration become a sensible option for more and more young people from Asia? Unlike their counterparts of earlier generations, the Asian youth of today are in the focal point of tremendous developments occupying a unique historical moment. They are the generation that has become heavily exposed and deeply immersed in both the turmoil and misery of poverty, inequalities, and unrest as well as profound improvements in modern technology and social media. Such immersion gives rise to the question of how these will impact on their attitudes and behaviour. Certainly they are now more motivated and ambitious as well as highly mobile and adaptable. These can be seen to be seriously facilitated by technology and globalization. Their age of marriage appears to be more and more delayed in many countries in order to accommodate their other less-traditional interests, including educational pursuits. They are now inclined to make decisions on their own outside of the family. The contributions of young people, in general, cannot be underestimated. No less than the International Labour Organization (ILO) acknowledges what the world's youth population can bring to the table of civilization.

> Young women and men bring numerous assets to the labour market: relevant and recent education and training; enthusiasm, hope and new ideas; willingness to learn and be taught; openness to new skills and technology; realistic expectations on en-

The phenomenal increase in the young-age populations of nearly all Asian countries since the 1970s forms the backdrop for the way the youth have been shaping and reshaping contemporary societies in the region. In 2000, the proportion of Asia's young-age group surged to nearly 60% of the world's total youth population (Hugo 2006: 3). This surge is often referred to as the 'youth population explosion' (Santa Maria 2002: 172) or the 'Asian Youth Bulge' (Fuller and Hoch 1998 as cited by Hugo 2008: 3). But while the youth population is expected to grow throughout much of Asia the same youth age group population in Europe is already declining (Hugo 2008) giving rise to perils as well as opportunities on both sides.

The youth of today in the Asian region also bear a huge responsibility to others. In many Asian societies, the youth are seen as the hope, not only of the family, but also of the nation even as they 'are viewed as victims of modernization, the sector most vulnerable to the rapid progress of society' (Santa Maria 2002: 171). Young people in Asian societies are socialized to the extent that providing for the family is of paramount importance (Go 1994). In a growing number of cases they are called upon to take up important family responsibilities such as taking care of the education of their younger siblings or that of becoming the head of the household altogether. As such it is not unusual for parents and elders to encourage their younger members to seek better opportunities of life and employment, including going overseas to work. In so many ways the future of the youth is an attribution to the future capabilities of the family (and most likely of the nation as a whole as well).

Youth's success in these endeavors is seen as the family's success; the youth's failure is the family's failure. (Santa Maria 2002: 178)

This paper provides an overview of the impact of international migration on the youth in Asia and its implications on the region's development prospects. The paper argues that proper management of migration makes it possible for young people (especially skilled ones) to move and find gainful employment that benefits both their countries of origin and destination. The underlying question that the paper intends to answer pertains to the capability of the young in the region to face these challenges in the context of global migration. Are the youth of today aware and equipped to deal with their generation's political and social problems? Towards this end the paper analyses the role that the youth of today will likely play in the future. In determining who they are the paper adopts the United Nations' definition of youth as persons who are from 15 to 24 years of age. This paper will first look at the extent of international mobility among Asian youth. It will then examine the development impacts and implications of such mobility and attempt to construct a suggestive framework to reduce the ill effects of migration and increase its positive outcomes.

## Asian Youth in Motion

Why do the youth matter in migration? The youth participate substantially in the migration phenomenon. They are able to do so for a variety of reasons as will be discussed below. A distinct manifestation of the significant changes affecting Asia today is the 'exponential increase in personal mobility', i.e., 'the extent to which people in Asia move on both permanent and non-permanent bases within and between countries has multiplied' (Hugo 2006: 11). In the midst of this flux are the youth. Migration is an age-selective (as well as gender-determining) process (UNDESA 2011). Indeed, the youth bulge can be seen as the drivers of migration within and beyond the region. There are three migration types that directly and significantly affect young people in Asia. These are labour migration, marriage migration, and student migration.

The high rate of mobility among the young is often accompanied by two events—a rapid increase in the youth age group in developing areas and a corresponding increase in employment opportunities for migrants in developed areas ostensibly brought about by a significant decline in their young-age population. A rapid increase in the number of young-age members of the population in developing Asia can create an employment vacuum in those areas

In the absence of strong and sustainable economic fundamentals, it is usually the youth who suffer first. The inability of states to find suitable domestic employment for their young is often manifested in their high rate of unemployment relative to those belonging to the upper-age groups or adults. The youth labour force participation rate across the board for Asia (and the world) has actually gone down significantly between 1998 and 2008 except for Southeast Asia (see Table 1). In general, young people are 'more than three times as likely as adults' to be unable to find gainful work (Morris 2006: 7). The ILO reports that nearly half of the world's unemployed are young people even though they comprise only a quarter of the working-age population. These youth unemployment figures are comparatively higher in Asia albeit in varying degrees. The Southeast Asia and Pacific sub-region has had the highest increase (24.5%) in youth unemployment in the region during the period between 1998 and 2008 (ILO 2011). In 2005 'young people in the labour force were almost six times (5.6) more likely than adults to be unemployed in South-East Asia;' nearly four times (3.8) in South Asia; and about three times (2.7) in East Asia (Morris 2006: 7). Nevertheless, youth labour force participation in Asia continues to be at significant levels as also seen in Table 1. Latest figures for 2010 show that the youth labour force participation rates are high in East Asia (60.3%), Southeast Asia (52.5%), and South Asia (41.3%) (ILO 2011). Understandably, the participation rates are higher for young men than for women in South and Southeast Asia while East Asia (due perhaps to its ageing population) has a higher female youth participation rate.

Table 1: Youth labour force participation rate by Asian sub-region (1998, 2008 - 2010)

| | Total % | | | | Male % | | | | Female % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1998 | **2008** | 2009 | **2010** | 1998 | **2008** | 2009 | **2010** | 1998 | **2008** | 2009 | **2010** |
| *World* | 53.8 | **50.1** | 49.4 | **48.8** | 61.5 | **57.8** | 57.0 | **56.3** | 45.7 | **41.9** | 41.4 | **40.8** |
| *East Asia* | 68.5 | **60.8** | 60.6 | **60.3** | 65.2 | **59.6** | 59.4 | **59.0** | 72.0 | **62.1** | 61.9 | **61.8** |
| *Southeast Asia and Pacific* | 53.9 | **53.0** | 52.7 | **52.5** | 60.1 | **60.0** | 59.8 | **59.4** | 47.5 | **45.8** | 45.4 | **45.2** |
| *South Asia* | 48.9 | **44.1** | 42.7 | **41.3** | 66.7 | **61.0** | 59.4 | **57.8** | 29.8 | **25.8** | 24.6 | **23.5** |

Source: Table 3, p. 10 (ILO 2011)

Population mobility is especially intense for those belonging to the younger age group (Hugo 2006). They are in fact the most mobile among the population. This is so because the propensity as well as motivation to move is highest among young people (UNDESA 2011) especially given the facts that they carry the most economic potential (in terms of their acquired skills) but that such potential remains untapped in their present areas of residence. Cross-border migration has become a primary option for many young people. The age distribution among international migrants is generally said to peak around the 20s and 30s (UNDESA 2011, Hugo 2006, and Hugo 2008: 7).

> [T]he proportions of migrants below age 18 are low, implying that the distribution by age rises steeply from age 18 to the modal age [23 to 27 years]… [O]n average, 2 out of every 5 newly arriving migrants are aged 18 to 29. No other age range of similar length concentrates such a high proportion of international migrants. (UNDESA 2011: 1)

Increased opportunities in developed areas have accelerated the flow of young migrants from developing areas. Their mobility prompts them to be more aggressive in selecting careers that have the highest potential to provide them with opportunities to go abroad. From 2000 to 2010 the number of Filipino students enrolling in nursing courses reached nearly 2.7 million but only 491,900 graduated from such courses and only 365,625 passed the licensure examinations (Jaymalin 2012). The Philippines is the largest source for the world's foreign nurses. The attractiveness of nursing as a career in the Philippines has caused the mushrooming of nursing schools in the country. In the 1970s there were only 40 nursing schools but by 2006 there were 470 such schools. The merchant marine is another opportunity seen by many Filipinos. Nearly 300,000 students graduate from about a hundred maritime schools in the Philippines each year. Not surprisingly, Filipinos make up the largest number of seafarers working in the global maritime industry. Over 200,000 Filipino seafarers are employed worldwide—more than any other nationality.

The global economy allows for the flow not only of capital and technology but also labour across borders. Such movement of labour across borders greatly impacts upon the world of youth. The Asia-Pacific region accounts for 55% of the world's total youth labour force, expected to reach 660 million by 2015 (Morris 2006: 3). It is apparent that

the young people of today from Asia are also able to move on a higher and accelerated scale relative to their earlier counterparts as well as to the older generation of the current population.

At the same time the inevitable shrinking and ageing of populations in developed countries have prompted the demand for younger and more skilled workers from developing countries. In their wake these migration flows and channels create new development opportunities in poor source areas.

A particular form of migration involving youths from Asia is student migration. The number of Asian students studying outside their home countries has increased exponentially in the last decade and a half (Hugo 2006). UNESCO reports that half the world's population of foreign tertiary level students is Asian. This will have serious implications later, when these students start to acquire skills and look for gainful employment. In terms of the total number of foreign students in selected countries, figures from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics indicate that Asian students greatly outnumber their counterparts in Africa and South America. In 2009, nearly seven out of 10 foreign students in the US were from Asia; eight out of 10 foreign students in Australia were from Asia; and nearly half of all the foreign students in the UK and Canada (as of 2008) were Asians (see Table 2). In 2008, the combined number of foreign students in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US reached nearly 1.3 million and more than 60% of that total comprised students from Asia. In terms of their countries of origin, among foreign students, China and India dominate throughout the 2000s (see Figure 1). Among Asian countries, China is the largest source of tertiary-level foreign students in the world followed by India and the Republic of Korea. Most of these foreign students are studying in educational institutions located in North America, Europe and parts of East Asia. Student migration is a form of human capital investment accumulation. There is certainly a need for source areas to avoid human capital flight (brain drain).

Figure 1: Foreign students by selected Asian country of origin (2001-2010)
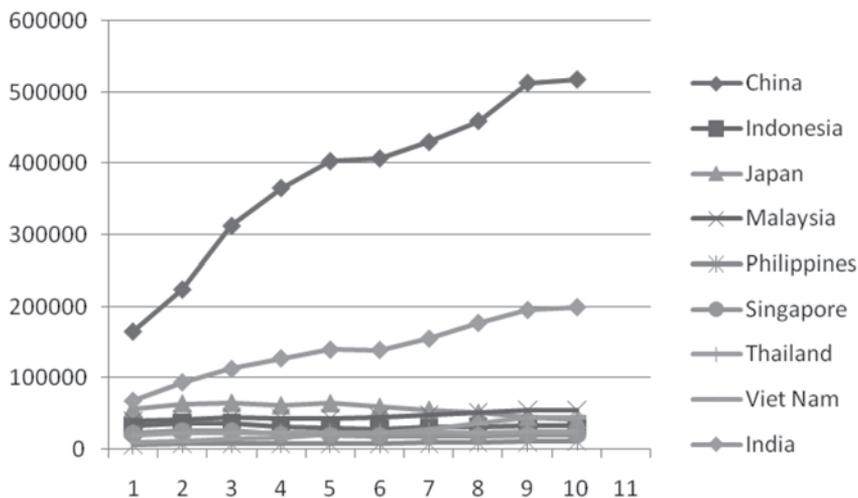


Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

Table 2: Foreign Students in Selected Destination Areas by Selected Region of Origin (2001-2009)

| Country | Year / Region of Origin of Foreign Students | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | Africa | ND | 6279 | 7049 | 5548 | 5740 | 6000 | 6797 | 7312 | 7695 |
| | South America | ND | 1595 | 1825 | 1433 | 1399 | 1477 | 1834 | 2149 | 2657 |
| | Asia | ND | 119737 | 134332 | 126900 | 138982 | 145338 | 168536 | 182904 | 203913 |
| | **TOTAL** | **120987** | **179619** | **188160** | **166954** | **177034** | **184710** | **211526** | **230635** | **257637** |
| Canada | Africa | 5994 | 6426 | 6813 | 6897 | 7254 | 10944 | 10479 | 12369 | ND |
| | South America | 1281 | 1389 | 1539 | 1623 | 1683 | 2251 | 2348 | 2343 | ND |
| | Asia | 18492 | 23748 | 30687 | 36186 | 38931 | 29043 | 44250 | 44128 | ND |
| | **TOTAL** | **42711** | **49572** | **59067** | **65001** | **69126** | **68520** | **92881** | **93479** | **ND** |
| United Kingdom | Africa | 18134 | 18751 | 21110 | 26696 | 29429 | 30967 | 33341 | 32279 | 35164 |
| | South America | 2926 | 2765 | 2652 | 3296 | 3212 | 3257 | 3533 | 3293 | 3557 |
| | Asia | 74400 | 80857 | 104252 | 140797 | 147384 | 152020 | 162807 | 160715 | 178513 |
| | **TOTAL** | **225722** | **227273** | **255233** | **300056** | **318399** | **330078** | **351470** | **341791** | **368968** |
| United States of America | Africa | 29676 | 37724 | 40193 | 38150 | 37702 | 37597 | 36594 | 35692 | 36330 |
| | South America | 28142 | 35653 | 35199 | 34788 | 36233 | 32308 | 31631 | 30950 | 32383 |
| | Asia | 294228 | 364418 | 368145 | 356881 | 373254 | 372172 | 388673 | 419580 | 451725 |
| | **TOTAL** | **475168** | **582996** | **586316** | **572509** | **590158** | **584719** | **595874** | **624474** | **660581** |

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

Several factors explain the rise in student migration. One factor is the increase in the number of young people in Asia who are now able to complete secondary education, allowing them to pursue further studies beyond the basic levels. Another factor is the increased level of affluence experienced in many developing societies, making it possible for the parents of these youth to afford to pay for their overseas education. Still another factor is the increasing globalization of education that allows Western institutions of higher learning to establish branch campuses in many countries in the developing world. This has the effect of making such branch campuses more attractive to more families in developing countries by putting them within their reach (UNDESA 2011: 6-7).

In the context of ageing populations in many developed areas, migration for the purpose of marriage has become another important reason for young people to move (UNDESA 2011). More and more young people are also migrating for marriage. The shortage of women in some countries combined with an ageing population necessitates the demand for young women. With the exception of a few countries, the Asian region in general is undergoing demographic transitions, i.e., declining mortality is taking place simultaneously with declining fertility. Declining fertility can lead to shortages of brides, especially in areas where there is already a gender imbalance in favour of males. Acute demographic problems in Japan and Taiwan necessitate this form of migration that not only creates a preference for migrants of a certain age but also of a certain gender. Preference is towards young (i.e., of child-bearing age) women from developing countries. Not surprisingly, cross-border marriage migration has seen a rapid increase in the last decade (Chia-Wen Lu and Wen-Shan Yang 2010). Chinese and Filipino brides become the top preferences among Japanese men while Indonesia, Vietnam, and China are the primary sources of brides for Taiwanese men. States in these areas tolerate such marriages given the demographic realities, i.e., low fertility and ageing populations.

As far as destinations are concerned East Asia, Western Europe, and North America are the key regions where one finds the highest concentration of the world's young migrants be they labour migrants, foreign students, or marriage migrants. Young people from Asia also predominate the migrant and immigrant populations in many destination areas. For instance, in Australia, nearly a third of the Asian migrants arriving there between 1996 and 2001 are aged between 15 and 24 years (Hugo 2006: 13). The Asian population in many destination areas has become a burgeoning population that can induce both positive and negative political implications for sending and receiving areas like.

## Youth Migration and Development in Asia

Youth migration has a development dimension. Undeniably, Asia's youth embody the critical combination of being highly skilled and intensely motivated, both economi-

cally and socially, relative to the other members of the population. As such their role as migrants can have development implications for the region.

Given their high degree of motivation and aggressiveness the potential for their exploitation and abuse becomes all the more heightened. It is not uncommon for many young (and inexperienced) migrants to be lured by trafficking syndicates, their technical skills notwithstanding. In many cases their economic motivations get the better of them and they end up being abused and exploited by unscrupulous labour brokers and employers. Nevertheless, their broad social networks (more likely due to their wide exposure to technologies and globalization) provide the Asian youth of today with some advantages in terms of being able to know what to expect when they do move.

Poor labour infrastructure in sending countries that disallow the absorption of their large young-age population can trigger social and political discontent and unrest as well as flight. In the Philippines, for instance, by the 1990s the youth, i.e., those aged between 10 and 24 years, comprised a third of the national population (Go 1994) and such a situation places serious demands on all public institutions.

> This huge and expanding number of young people puts greater pressure upon the income earners who feed them. It also puts pressure on society to establish more educational institutions and to create jobs. (Santa Maria 2002: 172)

Investments in the health and education sectors are crucial to the burgeoning youth population in Asia. This problem becomes especially acute in the Southeast Asia sub-region where the youth comprise nearly a quarter of the population and public institutions lack the resources necessary to provide adequate and even basic services. The extent to which the young-age population increases relative to the national population can have political implications as more and more of the youth become frustrated due to the absence or lack of gainful employment. Fuller and Hoch (1998) argue that the periods when countries experience the youth bulge also coincide with periods of political unrest in these countries.

As such it becomes crucial for sending countries in developing areas to gain from the contributions of their young-age migrants since they do send back remittances, and are likely to bring home crucial skills, knowledge, and experiences. It is not surprising that 'the proportion of migrants aged 15 to 24 among all international migrants is higher in developing countries than in developed countries and is highest among the least developed countries' (UNDESA 2011: 14).

> In 2010, international migrants accounted for 2.2 per cent of the population aged 15 to 24 in the world… Whereas in developed countries migrants accounted for 8.7 per cent of the population aged 15 to 24 in 2010, in developing countries they accounted for just 1.2 per cent of the population in that age group. Furthermore, in developed countries that proportion has been increasing as the population aged 15 to 24 declines, but in developing countries it has been declining… (UNDESA 2011: 14, 16)

From a social development standpoint not a few youths in the Asian region have become 'uprooted' by their mobile circumstances. An increasing number of youth from Asia are also developing their identities in the context of their heightened mobility (Dolby and Rizvi 2008). They have become globally oriented.

> Those who have a multiple and mobile sense of belonging view themselves as neither immigrants nor as tourists. They consider themselves to occupy an entirely different space. Unlike tourists, they are not interested in only a cursory look at its various physical and cultural objects and institutions. Nor do they regard themselves as immigrants. Both the concepts of tourism and immigration represent border-maintaining distinctions exerted around and by the nation state. While it might be possible for states to maintain physical borders, cultural borders have become increasingly porous. (Dolby and Rizvi 2008: 2)

Without a doubt whether the effects are negative or positive, international migration has contributed to the further integration of the Asian region (Hugo 2008) and the youth are playing a role in this process.

## Conclusions

Asia is a region of immense diversity in cultural, political, and economic terms both between and within jurisdictions and societies. This situation provides the backdrop for the intense demographic transitions now taking place and shaping the way many Asians look at themselves. Demography provides the crucial 'back story' for migration from and within Asia—'the story of the underlying demography at work' (Xenos 2004: 7). This demographic 'back story' unfolds in Asia in the form of the growth of its youth population and its increasing mobility in the region and beyond. In so many ways the Asian youth of today differ from their earlier counterparts—'they are the first generation to have grown up in the post colonial era, have universal primary education, been exposed to mass media and, importantly, they have been the first to grow up in the era of globalisation' (Hugo 2006: 1).

Young people contribute significantly to the flows of migrants internationally (Fussell and Greene 2002). Analyzing migration's effects on youth can proceed in many directions, i.e., it can have a net positive and/or negative effect on both sending and receiving areas. This paper would argue for the need to seriously explore the relationship between the rapid and profound demographic changes and cross-border migration as it impacts upon Asia. The development dimension is one that cannot be overlooked nor underestimated.

States play a role in the way that they look upon the migration phenomenon and the policy framework they apply to manage it. Managing migration requires that states undertake age-selective (in not a few cases gender- and ethnicity-selective) measures. In such cases it is the youth who are prioritized. Not only do states engage in 'selective

recruitment' but also determine the extent to which migrants are able to integrate into their respective societies. In many instances these involve curbing the rights of migrants. Obtaining a youth perspective with respect to the policy framework that states employ would certainly be a useful device to more deeply understand as well as reshape migration flows in Asia for development.

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# Youth's Participation in Anti-Corruption Movement in South Asia: Is There Such a Movement?

*Sanjay Kumar*

Youth is a broad ambiguous category generally used to denote a group of people who precede adult life and maturity. It is generally used to denote the young people who are no longer considered "children". There is no shared and accepted definition of the youth amongst South Asian countries even with regard to their age. It roughly varies between 14 to 35 years. According to the United Nations, youth are those who are in the age group 15-24, while in India, as per the Government of India definition those in the age group 13-35 are considered as youth, which is 41.05 percent of the country's population. The demographic definition of the youth is not consistent across other South Asian countries; it also varies from country to country. In Sri Lanka all those who are in the age group 14-30 are considered as youth, who constitute 26 percent of the total population in Sri Lanka. In Pakistan all those in the age group 15-29 are considered as youth and they constitute 27 percent of the country's total population. In Bangladesh those in the age group 18-35 are considered as youth while in Nepal it is those between ages 16-40, who are 38 percent of Nepal's total population. Clearly there is no accepted definition of youth across various countries even in terms of age.

Not only is there no accepted definition of youth in terms of their age, the general understanding of youth behaviour also varies from one country to another. The youth behaviour in each country is largely shaped by the socio-cultural background of this group, which again varies to a great extent from country to country. In some countries, the youth participate actively in social and political movements while in other countries, participation in social and political movements amongst the youth remains low. Though youths are broadly understood as a group of young people who oppose the accepted norms of living, trying to carve out a unique identity of their own, and raise their voices against injustice, the level of engagement of the youth in social and political movements is also shaped by the social and political environment in the country. Corruption as an isolated issue agitates all people irrespective of their gender, locality or age though in different degrees. It is natural that youth are not only concerned about corruption, they also feel agitated about it. But it is slightly unfortunate that there is an absence of a

systematic and sustained movement against corruption in most South Asian countries and if we do not witness sustained movements against corruption in these countries, we would certainly witness marginal involvement of youth in movement against corruption in these countries. What is more worrying is that there is lesser attention paid by the youth on the issue of corruption compared to other issues or problems faced by the people in their day-to-day life. In one of the national surveys in India, when youth were asked to name the most important problem they face today, 16 percent mentioned the problem of drinking water and economic problem as their first problem, 9 percent mentioned the problem of electricity, 7 percent mentioned the problem of price rise and poverty, and 6 percent mentioned the problem of road and public transport. It was surprising to note that only 1 percent amongst the youth mentioned corruption as their biggest problem.[1] The opinions of the youth on this issue were in no way different from the opinion of people of other age group. The findings of the study (NES) on this issue were not very different from the findings from a special study on youth in India a couple of years before this study. Even in this study, only 5 percent of youth mentioned corruption as the biggest problem. In that study 23 percent of youth mentioned unemployment and 21 percent mentioned poverty as the biggest problem.[2]

When the issue of corruption is not on the top of the mind of the youth, especially in India, it is difficult to imagine a high level of participation of the youth in movements against corruption. Leaving aside the youth's participation in movement against corruption, the level of participation of the youth in various political and social movements in South Asian countries have been uneven. Some countries see active involvement of the youth in protest movements while other countries witness low involvement of the youth in protest and demonstrations. During the last few years, Bangladesh and Nepal have witnessed much higher participation of the people and youth in particular in protests and movements compared to other countries.

Table 1: Level of participation of the youth in different protest movements in various South Asian countries

| Countries | Participated in | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Protest or demonstration | Protest for solving problem in your locality | Election Campaign |
| Indian | 13 | 18 | 18 |
| Pakistan | 7 | 17 | 11 |
| Bangladesh | 38 | 49 | 46 |
| Nepal | 17 | 44 | 17 |
| Sri Lanka | 17 | 33 | 20 |

Note: All figures are in percent
Source: State of Democracy in South Asia, survey conducted by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)

[1]  Findings from National Election Study conducted by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, (CSDS) during the 2009 Lok Sabha election.

[2]  Findings from A study on Indian Youth in a Transforming World: Attitudes and Perception, conducted by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS).

Just as there is no fixed definition across countries about who constitute youth even going by their age, and the level of youth's involvement in social and political movements is uneven, similarly there is no unanimity about what may be the accepted approach for studying youth. The current cultural anthropological approach tries to look at youth under the broader paradigm of global capitalism. This approach in a way departs from the earlier tradition of trying to understand the youth within their current economic, political and cultural conditions practiced by sociologists and anthropologists. The new approach tries to trace the reaction of the youth to the challenges of modernity and globalization, while at the same time trying to trace the category of youth as "sites of resistance" to every accepted norm and rules of existence in the current era of globalization. The recent movement against corruption in India, spearheaded in recent times by Anna Hazare, the influence of which spread to the other countries in South Asia, thereby encouraging many to join, becomes very interesting when studied amongst the demographic category of youth. Besides others, the youth took active part in the movement at a time when it was increasingly perceived that they have become disillusioned towards politics, though a recent study of youth in India indicate that the youth's interest in politics has not declined, but has steadily increased[3].

## Is Corruption a recent phenomenon?

One may believe that corruption is a recent phenomenon in India, but it is important to note that corruption was present even during British raj (drain of wealth) and even before that. In India, it is widely believed that corruption began soon after independence, when the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, introduced socialism in the post-independence period. It resulted in a state-led economy under governmental ownership of industry, bureaucratic control and red-tapism. This sowed the seed of corruption in the governmental sector. Even Pranab Bardhan in his study has mentioned the dominance of certain economic classes and the kinds of "pressures of patronage and subsistence" that they generate (Bardhan 1998). So when the professionals tried to use the taxation system to their advantage, the big business groups successfully set up their own monopolies and the rich farmers successfully set up their own power in the rural countryside. The misuse of public funds within the hands of the three classes led to the decline of investment and thus the slowing growth rate in the country. Similarly corruption is rampant in the Afghan world, whether in their everyday examples of UN-provided wheat being sold in the black market, or the farmer paying $33 to the Talibans to ship out a truck of apples, or the governor using armed men to remove workers from jobs if official bribes are not paid (Wahid 2012). Afghanistan is reduced to a mafia

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[3] A study on Indian Youth and Politics, An Emerging Engagement conducted by the CSDS, Delhi. The study indicated that compared to 37 percent of youth having an interest in politics in 1996, 62 percent of youth mentioned taking interest in politics in varying degrees in 2011.

world and even the claims of the US government at various times of aid to improve their conditions have not resulted in any betterment of the crime rates. Corruption is pervasive in the Afghan world, making Afghans' living a challenge as they lead a subsistence existence. It is not only in Indian and Afghanistan that we find corruption; it is also prevalent in other countries.

Transparency International in its 2002 report mentions how corruption is undermining developmental objectives in the state by seriously hampering economic growth and efficiency and not providing enough incentive to potential investors. Most importantly, corruption in South Asia is resulting in loss in resources from the poverty alleviation programs. The report further adds that in most of the countries in recent times, it is the public servants who are perceived as the most corrupt, especially in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. There is a complete lack of accountability and the monopoly of power in the hands of a large behemoth state, with the rampant use of extortion at every level in the society. The report further adds that countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh all fare poorly in the human development reports over the years, mainly as a result of the endemic corruption rooted in the society. Some of the studies on South Asia and its dismal developmental conditions argue that if India was to reduce corruption to a level similar to the Scandinavian countries, investment would shoot up by 12 percent and GDP by 1.5 percent (Human Development 1999). If the corruption level in Pakistan becomes similar to that in Singapore, it would result in an increase in GDP of at least 2 percent. Interestingly, it is widely believed that police, judiciary and land administration are the three most corrupt sectors in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. According to the recent 2011 corruption perception index, Nepal is second to Afghanistan in corruption (Ekantipur 2011). Even Transparency International, according to its 2011 Report, has placed Bhutan in 38th position, which is the least corrupt country in South Asia. Afghanistan, the most corrupt in this region is ranked 180th. The ranking clearly shows that when compared at an international level, corruption is embedded within South Asian society such that even the least corrupt country is behind 37 countries from other parts of the world.

The interesting aspect to note in this is that while corruption has become synonymous to South Asian countries today, it also true that movements as a reaction to corruption have been extremely slow. Generally the people of this region agree that corruption is widely present in the society, but at the same time fail to take any initiative against corruption in their society. In that case, the Anna Hazzare movement is significant as this was the first organized movement where people participated in this movement against corruption in large numbers. It is also important to note that though the movement was broad-based—it witnessed the participation of various sections of society—it was the youth who took the center stage in the movement. The Anna Hazzare effect influenced a number of social activists like Raja Jahangir Akhtar and Ansar Burney from Pakistan to take active participation in the anti-corruption movement. Jahangir Akhtar formulated his own anti-corruption bill to repeal the National

Accountability Ordinance of 1999. Nepal took part in the UN Convention against Corruption in February 2011 in August the same year and its cabinet tried to formulate an anti-corruption bill. Also in Nepal, there is a commission of investigation for abuse of authority (CIAA), which is the supreme constitutional body for corruption control. Interestingly, it is the political parties that are widely believed to be the most corrupt institution in Nepal after the constituent assembly failed to curb corruption in the society even after promising to do so in the Janandolan 2006. The survey conducted reported how the major reason for the use of bribes in the society was to speed up service entitled to them. In October 2011, Baban Singh, a law maker in Nepal began his fast unto death influenced by Hazzare. It is interesting to note that Singh was in the "most wanted list" of the police, and was also elected in Rautahat constituency 1 in the 2008 constituent assembly elections. The federation of Nepali journalists and civil society organizations came out in full support for him. He was charged for various criminal activities in India, including the 2006 Tipureshwar bombing in Delhi. His criminal past questions the authenticity of his participation in a movement like anti-corruption. Not surprising repeated surveys indicated low level of trust for political parties amongst common citizen in Nepal. During the survey conducted in 2005, 36 percent of people indicated no trust in political parties in Nepal. There was hardly any change in the level of people's trust in political parties when the survey was conducted again in 2007[4].

"December 25 will be a watershed in Pakistan's politics. Tsunami to destroy the corrupt political status quo," tweeted Imran Khan. Maybe he was correct as the day saw Pakistan's tehrik-e Insaf organize a massive protest against corruption in Pakistan, led by Imran Khan (Emmanuel Duparcq 2011). The October 30 rally which took place in Lahore also garnered more than 100,000 supporters to hear him. The scandals that embroiled the Zardari leadership and the Hazare effect further propelled him to organize a movement on a large scale. Fuel, electricity, law and order and corruption became issues to attack the government with. However, although the anti-corruption rallies organized by him did manage to garner significant support and interest among the people, it cannot be compared with the Hazare movement in India. First, most of the people who are trying to organize public anger against the government use the anti-corruption rhetoric merely as a part of the broader issues and complaints against corruption. Also the rallies are mainly organized by leaders with political affiliations in Pakistan, and not by non-political leaders. However when a member of civil society like Akhtar does come forward to protest against corrupt practices, the participation of the people is never significant. Also, even though the awareness is limited to organizing rallies and meetings, it is also true that it is never sustained over a period of time, and

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[4] Findings from the study State of Democracy in South Asia indicate lower level of trust for political parties across South Asian countries and this is not unique to Nepal. In India 46 percent of people mentioned no trust in political parties while in Pakistan the number is 44 percent . In Sri Lanka the level of distrust for parties is much higher: 57 percent people having no trust in political parties.

thus the protests remains limited to only sporadic events and fails to turn into a large-scale protest movement.

The Youth in Action Association works in Afghanistan to raise awareness and at the same time create a better possibility of a corruption-free society. The organization is a non-profit body mainly set up to ensure peace and sustainable development in the Afghan society; however, since corruption has become pervasive in the society, the body has taken active initiatives through social media, music and ICT to raise awareness and initiative amongst the youth to build a corruption-free country. When Karzai came to power, his government failed to tackle the problem of corruption even after promising to do so. Therefore, way back in September 2010, the Karzai government tried to limit the influence of the US government in the state, with the US media arguing that it was an attempt by the Karzai government to remove the influence of their mentors in the anti-corruption struggle from society. US officials are of the opinion that every member of the Afghan government is embroiled in corrupt practices. Although bodies like Major Crimes Task Force and Sensitive investigative Unit are in place in the country, they are backed by the US government and thus failed to function impartially. Also, when the bodies were instrumental in the arrest of one of Karzai's aides, Karzai immediately interfered to exert more control over the two organizations.

It is important to note that apart from lack of initiative on the part of the people in efforts for eradication of corruption, there is also a low level of involvement of the youth in movements against corruption, for which several explanations could be offered. We expect the youth to be energetic and enthusiastic, going by their age, but given the social and economic situation of the countries in the South Asian region most of the youth hardly remain as youth in their behavioural aspects. Large numbers of these youth live in dismal living conditions, are unemployed, and uneducated, and society hardly gives an opportunity to them to take part in decision-making, whether in the community, province or at the national level. Girls are embroiled in marriage and child-bearing responsibilities from an early age and thus lack any responsibility, initiative or awareness towards eradication of corruption from the society. The situation of the youth in many countries remains like this. The youth is hardly taught how to voice their opinions, or express their rights through their views and actions; instead, they are taught how to maintain the status quo, without questioning the accepted norms. This results in youth accepting everything in society without questioning. At the same time it is important to note that poverty and lack of education amongst the people make it impossible for a large proportion of youth to be aware of the methods and needs of eradication of corruption. Even during the Anna Hazare movement, most of the youth who participated in the movement were mostly educated youth. Although it is true that it is the common man who suffers the most as a result of corruption in society, at the same time, complete lack of education and extreme poverty make it difficult for the poor to be aware of the need to protest. At the same time, they generally live under the extreme domination of the rich and powerful of society, and therefore never learn the need to oppose; instead, they master the art of living in fear.

Though corruption is prevalent in most countries in South Asia, a movement against corruption and youth's participation in such a movement had been very weak in the entire South Asian region. If we turn the pages of history we hardly come across accounts of movements against corruption, but that does not mean that the problem of corruption is new and corruption as a problem did not exist in the past. The problem of corruption has been present in India for a long time. The same Lokpal bill failed to be passed by a number of governments prior to that of Manmohan Singh. However, a Hazare-like movement was never organized before in India. We did witness this new movement against corruption, which was somewhat sustained and did manage to put pressure on the ruling government. Youth's participation in this movement provided strength and sustainability to the movement. Added to youth's participation was clever use of the social media to galvanize youth support. Short Message System (SMS), Facebook and twitter ensured that participation in the movement almost became fashionable in the country. Along with this was the minute-by-minute comments and analysis in the television news channels, which helped in popularizing this movement. It also helped that the government at that time was engulfed in a number of corruption cases, which gave a reason for the organizers to mobilize the people. At the same time, the organizers were fairly united, It was also argued by many, like Aurundhati Roy, that the success was because of the brilliant organizing tactics of the leadership, which was further sustained because of NGO backing that was actually instrumental in organizing the movement. All these put together made the movement successful in mobilizing the people, especially the youth. While it is true that the movement could not be sustained beyond a few weeks, when there were huge gatherings in the Ramlila Maidan, and it could hardly bring about any fundamental change in levels of corruption, but at least such a movement demonstrated that people hold the supreme power in a democracy.

It is sad to note that even the Hazare-kind of movement against corruption which we witnessed in Indian recently is missing in most of the countries in South Asia, in spite of evidence of corruption being prevalent in many South Asian countries. Maybe to begin and sustain a movement against corruption in South Asian countries, like the Anna Hazare movement in India, clever use of many of the tactics used by the Hazare team is needed. As a strong leader is essential for any movement, any movement against corruption warrants the need for good leadership to lead the movement. The issue of corruption bothers people at large, but this is not enough for a movement against corruption. One needs a good leader in whom people have faith and who is seen a selfless. Anna Hazare passed the test for qualities which a good leader should possess; can leaders in other countries pass that test? It is easy to think of such leaders but extremely difficult to find.

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Youth's Participation in Anti-Corruption Movement in South Asia: Is There Such a Movement?

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# New Enemy of the State: Youth in Post-New Order Indonesia

*Manneke Budiman; Yuka D.N. Mangoenkoesoemo;*
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## Introduction

Youth's political activism and participation are not unusual in modern Indonesian history. During the revolutionary war against the Dutch colonial army, elements of *Pemuda* (youth) played an instrumental role in the armed struggle for independence and sovereignty between 1945 and 1949. They put themselves again at the frontline of change during the final years of Sukarno's era as they took to the streets to demand political and economic reforms in order to remedy the nation-wide crisis in the mid-1960s. They brought up three demands known as the *Tritura*, which urged the state to dissolve the cabinet, lower staple foods' prices, and disband the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The youth group, which named itself the "1966 Generation" (*Angkatan '66*), later broke up into fragments as some were co-opted by the New Order regime, while some others experienced disillusionment and set out to resist the authoritarian regime in the early 1970s.

During the New Order era, youth political participation was heavily depoliticized and de-revolutionized, a process which has intensified, particularly since the early 1980s. Street demonstrations were met with harsh responses by security forces on the ground of maintaining national security and stability. This was part of the effort to sterilize the public space from any revolutionary potential amongst the masses.[1] Strict political curfews on students' activism were heavy-handedly imposed through

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[1] Abidin Kusno, in his celebrated work on Indonesian urban space in relation to political cultures, *Behind the Postcolonial* (2000), argues that while Sukarno used the public space as a site for "populist politics" by mobilizing the masses on streets and other public places for his revolutionary agenda, Suharto took the opposite path. He instilled a new image of the street as a "dangerous place" infested by criminals and thugs, thus discouraging people from associating themselves with it. See Kusno, pp. 97-119.

state-sanctioned mechanisms such as the NKK and BKK[2], in addition to compulsory attendance in ideological indoctrination programs that were made prerequisite to the completion of studies.[3] In the early 1990s, as the New Order's legitimacy was quickly being subverted by rampant corruption, human right violations, and increasing demands for democratization, a group of college students set up a political party called the PRD (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*, People's Democratic Party), which was immediately declared as an illegal organization by the state based on the allegation that the party was a mere camouflage for communism. When Indonesia was hit by the Asian monetary crisis, student movements took over the streets again and used them as sites of resistance to the crumbling regime. The movements of 1998 gave birth to a new generation of students popularly known as the "1998 Generation" (Angkatan '98) that is often associated with *Gerakan Reformasi* (Reform Movement), which claimed to have put an end to Suharto's thirty years of authoritarian rule.

At the same time, however, images of the street as a locus of anarchy and danger persist even after the Reform era, and this is largely due to the increasing frequency and level of violence of students' street-brawls, which involved not only secondary school students but also college students from different schools and universities. Based on the data from *Kompas* daily that were obtained from police statistics, in 2009 there were eleven incidents of students' street-brawl, which rose to twenty eight in 2010, and by June 2011 the number had already reached thirty-one. Most of these brawls took place in big cities such as Jakarta and Medan.[4] The majority of the respondents interviewed by the daily blamed peer pressure as the determining factor for the brawls, but a law professor from a university in southern Sumatra reportedly suggested that the disturbing phenomenon had to do primarily with moral degradation that happened because students had lost trust in the law, as well as in law enforcement agencies and other state

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[2]  NKK stands for *Normalisasi Kehidupan Campus* (Normalization of Campus Life), a notorious state program which discouraged students from any involvement in so-called '*politik praktis*' (practical politics), whereas BKK is short for *Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan* (Student's Coordinating Body), a state-supervised student body whose task was to ensure that the depolitization program was implemented under the watchful eye of the state through its apparatuses in the Ministry of Education.

[3]  The most intensive and large-scale indoctrination program implemented nation-wide to almost all sectors of society was the P4 Training (*Penataran Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*, Training on the Guidelines for the Understanding and Implementation of Pancasila, the state ideology) for secondary school and college students, civil servants, state officials, members of the military, as well as members of mass organizations affiliated with the state.

[4]  "Tawuran pelajar tak kunjung surut", *Kompas*, Friday, October 21 (2011), downloaded from: http://edukasi. kompas.com/read/2011/10/21/02385365/Tawuran.Pelajar.Tak.Kunjung.Surut, accessed on February 23, 2012, 10.30am.

apparatuses, which they considered to have failed in providing positive role models for the young generation.[5]

The main argument of this article is that all these have led to youth being branded as a threat not only to national security but also to the dominant moral values that the state claims to safeguard, as stipulated in the Law No. 25/2000 on the National Development Program 2000-2004.[6] While youth have been perceived as a problem to the state for various reasons for a long time, the post-New Order period has witnessed a new development in terms of how the perception has hardened and how youth have been systematically stigmatized as a "new enemy of the state", especially during the SBY administration.[7] The need to build a demonic image of youth in the current period comes from a distinct motive that begs to be understood in a different context from that of the New Order period. The current administration is facing an increasing crisis of legitimacy as public opinion on its performance continues to indicate a significant drop. A recent poll conducted by the LSI (*Lembaga Survei Indonesia*, Indonesian Survey Institute), for instance, shows that the ruling party's popularity among voters has fallen from fifty per cent in mid-2009 to a mere fourteen per cent by the end of 2011.[8] The trend revealed by the survey result clearly does not favor the incumbent, and this leads to the second argument proposed by this article, namely that the state is in dire need of a viable means to restore its standing in public's eye. Demonizing the youth as a threat to order and morality seems to provide the state with at least a temporary way-out for evading poor public perception of its performance in eradicating corruption, settling human right violation issues, and fighting poverty. Attention has to be diverted from competency issue to morality issue, since morality politics has become the newly contested arena in Indonesia in the last decade.

For these purposes, case studies have been conducted on three separate incidents involving youth. The first is the self-immolation committed by a college student named Sondang Hutagalung, age 22, in front of the Presidential Palace in Jakarta on December 7, 2011, as a protest against the state's indifference and passive stance *vis-à-vis* social injustice and abuse of power by its apparatuses. Sondang's dramatic act, followed by his death two days later from severe burning wounds, spurred controversy on whether it was a waste of life or a heroic act as the state was busy to downplay the significance

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[5]  "Pengamat: Siswa tawuran karena degradasi moralitas", *Antara News*, Monday, November 21, (2011), downloaded from: http://www.antaranews.com/berita/285730/pengamat-siswa-tawuran-karena-degradasi-moralitas, accessed on February 23, 2012, 10.50am.

[6]  Chapter VI of the document gives the state the right to reinforce the role of religion as an ethical, moral and spiritual platform upon which all state laws are to be founded (pp. VI-1 – VI-4).

[7]  SBY is the widely used initial of the incumbent's name, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

[8]  The survey titled "Political Change Leading to 2014" was conducted nation-wide on 2,050 samples from February 1 to 12, 2012, and released on February 19, 2012. For further details, see Lembaga Survei Indonesia: http://www.lsi.or.id/riset/411/Rilis_LSI_Perubahan_Politik_2014, accessed on February 23, 2012, 11.30am.

of the incident. The second case deals with a police raid and arrest of sixty-five punks who gathered in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, for a charity concert, based on a suspicion that drugs and alcohol were consumed during the event on December 15, 2011. They were subsequently sent to a moral re-education boot-camp run by the provincial police before being returned to their families. Finally, a fifteen-year-old boy, known largely by his initial A.A.S., was accused of stealing a pair of sandals belonging to a police officer and pronounced guilty by the court on January 4, 2012 after a lengthy process of law that took more than a year. He was found guilty, punishable up to five years in prison.

## Hero or Loser?

In his prime age of twenty-two and in his senior year in college, Sondang Hutagalung was a student activist who was actively involved in the student body at the university where he studied law and also in various events in support of the human right cause. He was in the process of finishing his undergraduate thesis when he joined a demonstration at the presidential palace on that fateful day of December 7, 2011, doused himself with gasoline, lay down on the asphalt, and lit himself. Witnesses said that he did not even say anything or flinch from pain while the fire burnt his body.[9] KONTRAS, a major human right organization specializing in helping find missing and murdered victims of state-sanctioned violence, noted that Sondang was one of its community members. He participated in a theatrical performance organized by KONTRAS on September 7, 2011, in commemoration of the death of Munir, a human right activist who was assassinated by poisoning on his flight to the Netherlands a few years ago, presumably by a state intelligent agent. That was the last time his friends in KONTRAS saw him, for after that he told them that he would be gone to finish his thesis.[10] Four days after the incident, Sondang succumbed to his wounds, his body suffering ninety-eight per cent burns, leaving a father, who works as a taxi driver, and a mother, who is a modest housewife, in grief.

How did the state and public react to this kind of tragedy, which has never happened before in the history of protests against the state in postcolonial Indonesia? At first, the police stated that Sondang might have been one of the protesters from a remote village who came to the capital to demand a civil servant status, but a street-vendor who happened to be in the area contradicted that statement, saying that Sondang can't have been

[9]  As reported in *Poskota Online*, "Lelaki bakar diri di depan Istana Merdeka", Thursday, December 8 (2011), in: http://poskotanews.com\lelaki-bakar-diri-di-depan-istana-merdeka.html, accessed on February 8, 2012, 07.00pm. At this time, it was also reported that the person was between thirty and thirty-five years old. Some other media even confused his gender, reporting that it was a female person who set herself on fire in front of the presidential palace.

[10]  As reported by http://metro.vivanews.com on Friday, December 9 (2011) in: http://metro.vivanews.com/news/read/270923-profil-sondang-hutagalung--pria-bakar-diri, accessed on February 8, 2012, 03.50pm.

one of the protesters as they had already long gone when the incident happened.[11] Later in the evening of that day, a group of students arrived at the hospital bringing roses to express their solidarity. One of the students stated in an interview, "This act of self-immolation at the palace was an expression of disappointment with the government. There will be more anarchy coming [...]. We don't know him, nor do we know what his motive is. But he is a hero."[12] Only two days later did they managed to have his identity correctly established, and the controversy shifted from his identity to his motive.

Baharudin Djafar, the Jakarta police spokesperson, told journalists, "He was the perpetrator as well as the victim. Only he had the answer—we couldn't guess his motive," while at the same time remaining skeptical that the act was a protest against the government.[13] The police chief of North Jakarta district went even further, stating that Sondang was a homeless man who suffered from mental disorder,[14] which angered many and caused a violent clash between student protesters and the police during a demonstration for solidarity with Sondang that took place on December 14, 2011, in which angry students threw rocks at the despised police chief.[15] The government's official response equally undermined the moral and political significance of Sondang's death, even though it was not as blatant as the comments made by the police. Dipo Alam, Secretary to SBY's Cabinet, expressed the official condolences without failing to add that the step taken by Sondang was a wrong step in fighting for a good cause. He categorized the act as a "suicide", pointing out that all religions consider it a sin.[16] To make matters worse, Alam—himself a former student activist during his college years—added that the President would send the Minister of Transportation, E.E. Mangindaan, to the funeral to represent the government in expressing its condolences,

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[11] *Poskota Online*, ibid.

[12] Ibid.: "*Aksi bakar diri di depan istana menunjukkan kekecewaan pada pemerintah. Bakal ada lagi aksi anarkis lain [...] Kami tak mengenalnya dan tak tahu motifnya. Tapi dia adalah pahlawan.*"

[13] See "Indonesian man dies after self-immolation", in http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesian-man-dies-after-self-immolation/483987, *The Jakarta Globe*, December 11 (2011), accessed on February 8, 2012, 07.35pm.

[14] "Polisi terus represif, mahasiswa tegaskan tak akan gentar", in *Rakyat Merdeka Online (RMOL)*, Wednesday, December 14 (2011), in: http://www.rakyatmerdekaonline.com/read/2011/12/14/48992/Polisi-Terus-Represif,-Mahasiswa-Tegaskan-Tak-Akan-Gentar- accessed on February 8, 2012, 07.50pm.

[15] "Korlap: Kapolres dilempar batu karena bilang Sondang gila", *Tribun News*, December 14 (2011), in: http://www.tribunnews.com/2011/12/14/korlap-kapolres-dilempar-batu-karena-bilang-sondang-gila, accessed on February 8, 08.07pm.

[16] In an unmistakably patronizing tone, Dipo Alam "lectured" other student activists not to follow Sondang's misguided footstep and told them that the purpose of a struggle was to live, not to die: "Youth activists have to have the courage to live, rather than being daredevils by immolating themselves" (*Pemuda berjuang harus berani hidup. bukan berani mati dengan cara membakar diri*), in "Seskab: Pemuda berjuang harus berani hidup, bukan berani bakar diri", http://www.jakcity.com/nasional/2011/12/11/1913/seskab-pemuda-berjuang-harus-berani-hidup-bukan-berani-bakar-diri, Jakcity.com, December 11, 2011, accessed on February 12, 2012, 11.05am.

but it did not condone the act.[17] Mangindaan was also sent to wish Sondang's family Merry Christmas. Earlier, the presidential spokesman, Julian Aldrin Pasha, explained that Mangindaan was deemed to be the right person to represent the state because he is a Christian like Sondang's family. However, in the same website, Mangindaan was quoted as saying that visiting the deceased young man's family was "his own initiative as a fellow Christian" rather than as the Minister of Transportation.[18]

Thus, the state and its apparatuses employed several strategies to deal with Sondang's self-immolation: first, disinformation created by a string of confusions regarding the boy's age, identity and motive, and second, a flat expression of sympathy that disguised the state's denunciation of the act. Finally, an attack on Sondang's character was carried out by portraying him as a "lost soul" who committed a senseless act out of despair and shortsightedness. Clearly, the state was certainly unprepared for a protest in the form of self-immolation. While similar acts committed by Buddhist monks elsewhere are quite common, it has never occurred in Indonesia before. The state needed to take several different steps that may have contradicted one another, yet overall made up a coherent strategy that served both to defuse the damaging political effect that the action might cause and to give the impression that the state was sympathetic to efforts made by its citizens to voice their grievances. On the other hand, student activists across the country portrayed Sondang as a "martyr" who sacrificed himself for a noble cause, and whose death was considered a "slap on the face" of the government.[19] To them, the final-year law student with a GPA of 3.7 was far from mentally deranged or recklessly taking his own life.

Sondang's final notes reveal the reasons he took such an extreme path. He left two handwritten messages, one for the government and the other for his family and comrades-in-arms. The former contains an expression of anger at the government for allowing all kinds of social problems to happen in the country, as well as for taking part in the creation of such problems instead of finding the remedy: "Damn injustice. Damn indifference. Damn poverty. Damn pain and distress. Damn all the evil rulers. Damn all evils. For now I am totally numb."[20] It is clear from this note that Sondang saw that

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[17]   See "Seskab: Presiden simpati pada keluarga Sondang"; the statement was published in the official website of the State Cabinet Secretariat in: http://setkab.go.id/index.php/pengumuman/2010/12/08/wp-includes/index.php?pg=detailartikel&p=3268 on December 13, 2011; accessed on February 12, 11.20am.

[18]   Ibid.

[19]   "Mahasiswa Sumbar berduka wafatnya Sondang 'martir' pergerakan" in http://indowarta.com/index.php?view=article&catid=131%3Asumatera-barat&id=14019%3Amahasiswa-sumbar-berduka-wafatnya-sondang-martir-pergerakan&option=com_content&Itemid=376, *Indowarta*, December 13, 2011; accessed on February 12, 2012, 12.35pm.

[20]   *Terkutuklah buat ketidakadilan. Terkutuklah buat ketidakpedulian. Terkutuklah buat kemiskinan. Terkutuklah buat rasa sakit dan sedih. Terkutuklah buat para penguasa jahat. Terkutuklah buat para penjahat. Setelah aku tidak punya rasa lagi.*

the most serious social disease was the state's indifference. He sensed that today, people just choose to shut their eyes from all the sufferings caused by widespread injustice and evil practices conducted by those in power, which have brought pain especially to the weak and the needy. His death, in this context, can be interpreted as serving a dual objective: on the one hand, it condemned the government in general but SBY in particular for their passive stance with regard to social issues. On the other, it was a symbolic refusal to admit defeat to indifference, which also seemed to be a wake-up call from the mind-numbing situation of the country. The second note is much more personal. He apologized to his family and friends, and extended special thanks to his parents, calling them both "the best Daddy and Mommy" (without losing his sense of humor, as he used the slang words *bokap* and *nyokap* for *father* and *mother*, which are not normally used when one is directly addressing one's parents).[21]

The public, however, were rather divided, and their reactions were ambiguous at best. *The Jakarta Globe*, for instance, interviewed five people from different backgrounds: a university lecturer, taxi driver, business consultant, humanitarian worker, and human right/peace activist, in its December 13 edition. Surprisingly (or, maybe, unsurprisingly), only one of those five interviewed spoke sympathetically about the incident. While they generally agreed that the government did not do its homework in terms of fighting corruption and fixing the other social problems, most of them disapproved of Sondang's self-immolation. Furthermore, they were almost uniform in voicing their skepticism that the government would take the act seriously and start implementing changes as demanded. Some expressed their prediction that there would be more similar incidents if the government did not take necessary steps to fix the problems.[22]

Judging from how the media reported public opinion regarding the incident, it seemed that the government was partly successful in influencing the public to view the incident as basically a desperate act of suicide by a frustrated young man and, based on this presumption, what followed was amoral and religious judgment which look at suicide as a sin and a human's failure to face the challenges of life due to a lack of faith. The circulating discourse of Sondang's self-immolation shifted from his protest and anger at the government to a moral discourse about what he should and should not have done in the first place. What is interesting was that two Islamic *ulamas* separately expressed their moral support to Sondang and even praised his act as heroic. His death, according to one of them, was a noble death in the path of Allah (*syahid*), and the *ulama*'s congregation held a public funeral prayer for Sondang. Both of them encouraged

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[21] "Pesan terakhir Sondang Hutagalung", in http://www.vhrmedia.com/2010/detail.php?.e=5351, VHR Media, January 19 (2012); accessed on February 12, 2012, 04.25pm.

[22] See *The Jakarta Globe*, December 13 (2011), "An act of courage, or desperation?", in http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/lifeandtimes/an-act-of-courage-or desperation/484487?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=jgnewsletter, accessed on February 12, 2012, 05.13pm.

other youth to follow Sondang's struggle in giving voice to truth, but refrained from giving an explicit support to his martyrdom by means of self-immolation.[23] Neither of the two *ulamas* invoked the concepts of sin and human weakness before the eyes of God as many other commentators had done in media interviews. Overall, however, the government did quite an effective job in downplaying the significance of the incident, although it is yet to be seen whether Sondang has set a new trend of political protest against the state.

## The Threat of Style

In subculture studies, *punk* is defined as a specific type of youth culture in which style is exploited or, more appropriately, "twisted", in order to be used as a form of refusal to the dominant culture that produces the style in the first place.[24] Therefore, the punk phenomenon contains its own internal contradiction as, on the one hand, it attempts to assert its difference and independence from the "parent culture", yet, on the other, embraces the capitalist mode of production that dominates the parent culture. In the words of an observer, punks "use homemade tattoos [to] stun the rocker and body piercings to jolt the rest of us out of the prisonhouse of our conformity."[25] More recent studies of youth subculture, however, have indicated a shift away from studies that view types of subculture as a politics of style that intersects with class politics towards an alternative view which sees subculture as a way of embracing contemporary culture instead of resisting it.[26] This essay tends to perceive punks in Indonesia in light of this new perspective, for the growth of punks in this country seems to be influenced more by globalization than class politics, although style remains at the center of their identities. In other words, although style is used as a marker of difference in terms of identity formation, it does not necessarily serve as a "weapon" to attack mainstream culture, as suggested by older subculture theories.

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[23] "Bakar diri, cara Sondang melukis problem HAM", *Hukum Online*, Monday, January 23 (2012), in http://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/lt4f1d1f6d48abf/bakar-diri-cara-sondang-melukis-problem-ham, accessed on February 12, 2012, 07.45pm.

[24] See Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), p. 2. See also Willis, "Hardcore: Subculture American style" (1993), pp. 365-67 and 378-79. Echoing Hebdige, Willis argues that style becomes the main political instrument for disillusioned youth to 'attack' the parent culture, which they blame for their disadvantaged material conditions.

[25] Tittley, "A new approach to youth subculture theory", in http://www.sonlifeafrica.com/model/subcult3.htm, downloaded on February 5, 2012, 09.30pm.

[26] Ibid. Tittley points out that, unlike the old theories of subculture that portray youth as being constantly at odds with the dominant culture, the new approach tends to reinterpret subcultures as the result of creative and productive endeavors by youth groups in search for new identities that are not necessarily hostile to the dominant culture.

It is in this distinct context that the police raid on a punk gathering in Banda Aceh, Sumatra, on December 10, 2011, needs to be understood. Punks from various regions in Indonesia organized a charity concert as a fundraising project to aid some local orphanages, in the capital of the Aceh Province, known to be the only province in Indonesia that implements the Islamic sharia as its bylaws. The Governor of Aceh, Irwandi Yusuf, claimed that the charity concert did not have a permit from the local police.[27] He also stated that the police found drugs during their raid, which saw sixty-four punks being rounded up and arrested. In addition, the punks were accused of possessing a false permit from the local *ulama* council, which is needed whenever a public event is held. However, he denied that the police action had anything to do with the image of Aceh as an Islamic region renowned as the "terrace of Mecca" (*serambi Mekah*).[28] In a separate statement, however, the police explained that the raid was carried out because the punks had brought disgrace to the image of Aceh as an Islamic province.[29] To protest the arrest, punk communities of Jakarta organized a rally in front of the National Police headquarters, accusing the police of having violated the punks' rights to free speech and public gathering. A spokesperson for the protester said that punks were not criminals and, although they lived on streets, they cared about the poor and the underdogs.[30]

Meanwhile, the police insisted that what happened was neither a raid nor an arrest. The police only wanted to "educate" the punks so that they would "go back home" and "go back to school" instead of living on streets as if they were homeless.[31] The punks arrested on that day were then transported to a police training camp for re-education, in which officers shaved their distinctive "Mohawk" hairstyle, seized their body-piercing paraphernalia, and instructed them to perform various kinds of physical exercise such as push-ups, sit-ups and crawling, which lasted for ten days, during which the kids were prohibited from leaving the camp. To convince the public that no violent measures were applied, the parents were invited to visit, watch, and pick up their children on the last day of the program so that they would be able to see with their own eyes the "transformation" that had happened to their children, as well as watching them perform some artistic works that they had created during the training. A mother interviewed by the

[27]  Wirakusuma, "Polisi lakukan pembunuhan karakater komunitas punk", *okezone.com*, December 20 (2011), in http://news.okezone.com/read/2011/12/20/338/545039/polisi-lakukan-pembunuhan-karakater-komunitas-punk, accessed on February 17, 2012, 10.25pm.

[28]  Wirakusuma, "Gubernur Aceh: Punk palsukan surat izin dan bawa narkoba", *okezone.com*, December 20 (2011), in http://news.okezone.com/read/2011/12/20/338/544900/gubernur-aceh-punk-palsukan-surat-izin-bawa-narkoba, accessed February 17, 2012, 10.45pm.

[29]  Wirakusuma, "Polda Aceh dituding lecehkan anak punk", *okezone.com*, December 20 (2011), in http://news.okezone.com/read/2011/12/20/338/544773/polda-aceh-dituding-lecehkan-anak-punk, accessed on February 17, 2012, 10.55pm.

[30]  Ibid.

[31]  Ibid., Wirakusuma, "Gubernur Aceh: Punk palsukan surat izin."

press stated that she was thankful for her son's re-education and hoped that he would go back to school after that.[32] A punk said that he was happy for the opportunity to learn how to live a disciplined life and many other new things in the camp, including praying five times a day.[33] Another punk from Medan, however, declared with confidence that he would continue being a punk because "punk is not just a style, but it's a soul."[34]

The street, where these punks spend most of their time, is juxtaposed with "home" and school" in order to reinforce the notion that a punk's lifestyle is associated with juvenile delinquency, drug-abuse, and disorderly life. Home and school, on the other hand, represent decency, discipline, and even—as the above testimony of one of the punks suggested—devotion to God. When parents fail to instill such positive values on their children, the state steps in to take over the responsibility of upbringing. That the parents of the sixty-five punks were invited to watch their children's activities in the camp must have been meant to be a humbling experience for them, which made them feel thankful, but it might conversely have also brought shame to them, especially when the media were also present to cover the "spectacle". The state, represented by the Governor of Aceh and the local police, played the role of a surrogate parent who possessed not only legal authority over its citizens but also moral superiority. Moreover, the arrest of the punks in Aceh also served as a warning to other youth groups across the country that the state demands nothing less than obedience, paired with decent education, which can only come from home and school instead of the street. The state wants to create, in Michel Foucault's terms, "docile yet disciplined" citizens who will stay away from trouble and do their best to serve the state.[35]

In the case of forced re-education boot-camp, the body became the main battle-ground for both the state and the punks. Punks use their bodies, from hair to toes, in offensive ways to show their refusal to the dominant culture. When the state strikes back, its primary objective is to reclaim their power over the citizen's body, and this is why the punks were exposed to harsh physical training after their spiky hair was cleanly shaved, as if the state had wanted to assert that the body was a "state territory", of which citizens have no right to claim ownership. Similar public relation strategies in dealing with the media and public opinion such as those used in Sondang Hutagalung's damage control effort were employed by the authority in Aceh: accusing the punks to have consumed drugs during the concert, which was fiercely denied by the punks, yet worked effectively in shaping public opinion, as an association between punks and juvenile delinquency has been firmly established; winning the parents' support for the

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[32]  See "65 Anak punk Aceh dikembalikan ke orangtua", *okezone.com*, December 23 (2011), in http://news. okezone.com/read/2011/12/23/340/546615/65-anak-punk-aceh-dikembalikan-ke-orangtua, accessed on February 18, 2012, 09.00pm.

[33]  Ibid.

[34]  Ibid.

[35]  See *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

action taken, even when the "victims" of such action were none other than their children; and self-portrayal of the state as a sympathetic authority figure that cares about the physical, social and moral well-being of its citizens.

Classical subculture theories tend to romanticize youth subcultures such as the rockers, skinheads and punks as heroic, albeit symbolic, forms of resistance.[36] Therefore, subcultures, more often than not, have almost been identical with rejection of anything mainstream. However, new developments in subculture studies have forced scholars to come to terms with a new phenomenon called the "straightedge subculture", namely youth subcultures that "resist a promiscuous and self-indulgent youth culture as well as commercialized mainstream culture that entices youth to engage in destructive behaviors".[37] The term "straightedge" originally comes from the lyric of a song made in the early 1980s, which, among others, says: "I'm a person just like you/ but I've got better things to do/ than sit around and smoke dope/ cuz I know that I can cope/ I laugh at the thought of eating 'ludes/ I laugh at the thought of sniffing glue/ Always want to be in touch/ Never want to use a crutch/ I've got the straight edge."[38] The lyric clearly tells a completely different story of punks, in which they are depicted as "normal" human beings who shy away from drug and cigarette consumption, and who intend to keep their heads clean. They are, in short, a youth group that is not anti-establishment and practices a healthy and disciplined way of living. They are critical of other punks who choose to go against the system rather than working towards social change.[39]

In the counter-discourse launched by fellow punks regarding the police raid in Aceh, in which punks were portrayed in a negative light, punks are represented as having to bear unfair and biased moral judgment based on their outer appearance, while in actuality they are law-abiding citizens who work hand-in-hand with other citizens for the betterment of the nation. Embracing punk culture is their way to contribute to social change, just like the faithful making their contribution through embracing religions.[40] In this regard, the punks seemed to try to represent themselves in terms of the positive characteristics with which straightedge punk communities would associate themselves, even though in the media coverage of the incident the term *straightedge* was never brought up or referred to by the punks as a strategy to dissociate themselves from the

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[36]  Woo, "Subculture Theory and the Fetishism of Style" (2009), pp. 24-25.

[37]  Williams, "The Straightedge Subculture on the Internet" (2003), p. 64.

[38]  Quoted in Williams, ibid., p. 64.

[39]  Ibid., p. 65. Straightedge punks were also reported to practice vegetarianism, and be involved in animal rights activism, and even religious cultism. Mainstream culture is opposed not because it is dominant but because it is considered already co-opted by consumerism.

[40]  From a media interview with Abram, from Komunitas Taring Babi, a punk community that participated in the protest for solidarity in front of the police headquarters in Jakarta on December 19, 2011. See "Lindungi hak anak punk", *Sindonews.com*, December 19 (2011), in http://sindonews.com/read/2011/12/19/437/544487/lindungi-hak-anak-punk, accessed on February 18, 2012, 11.30pm.

negative stigma attached to their style and appearance. Sance Herianto, an underground punk activist, expressed his disgust at the fact that the sixty-five punks had to endure humiliating physical torments just because their concert did not obtain the necessary permit from the authority.[41] Aris Setiawan, an ethnomusicologist, suspected that what had happened in Aceh was an attempt at criminalizing the punks because their resistance to mainstream culture was narrowly interpreted by the state as an opposition to authorities, including the state, and thus had to be neutralized through oppressive means disguised as "re-education".[42]

Similar to Sondang's case, in dealing with the controversy surrounding the police raid on the punks in Aceh, the state made a systematic attempt at portraying youth as immature, fragile, and unable to make informed decisions on their own action; therefore, unless they are given the necessary "moral training", they would be a source of trouble to society, such as what has been proven in Sondang's case. The state seemed to suggest that it tried to prevent trouble from happening by means of pre-emptive action in the form of a police raid. Therefore, youth are considered dangerous not because they are perceived to have a capability to destabilize the state's power or launch a well-organized rebellion against the state but because they lack self-control and tend to stray from what the state would define as "normal". State intervention, in this sense, is deemed necessary in order to maintain such normalcy. Hence the tensed relationship between youth and the state in Indonesia.

## A Scandalous Pair of Sandals

Three underage boys in Palu, Central Sulawesi, were accused of stealing a pair of sandals which, unfortunately, belonged to a police officer, in November 2010. The sandals were left in front of the officer's rented house when they went missing, and it seemed nothing happened as a result of that loss until May 2011, when the owner of the sandals, aided by two other officers, summoned the three boys to their compound for interrogation. There was an allegation by the parents of the boys that, during the interrogation, police brutality had been committed upon the three youngsters in order to force a confession. The parents of one of the boys, A.A.L.,[43] filed a complaint to the officers' superior, and this was where the case began to spin out of control as the officer who lost his sandals, Ahmad Rusdi, also filed a theft report against the boy, in retaliation. The case was brought to court on December 20, 2011, which attracted public attention, including that of the child protection's national body (KPAI, *Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia*), since the crime that A.A.L. was accused of is

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[41]  Wirakusuma, ibid., "Polisi lakukan pembunuhan karakter".

[42]  "Lindungi hak anak punk", ibid.

[43]  Due to his underage status, the full name of A.A.L. will remain confidential, and his initial will be used hereafter.

punishable by a five-year imprisonment. During the legal process, the KPAI mobilized public solidarity for A.A.L. by organizing "public donation of a thousand sandals for Officer Ahmad Rusdi".[44] On January 4, 2012, the judges pronounced A.A.L. guilty as charged but, instead of sentencing him to serve time in jail, they decided to return the boy to his parents for further upbringing.

In response to the unexpected waves of public protests that were directed at them, the police—suddenly finding themselves in hot water—defended their decision by stating that it was A.A.L.'s parents' initiative to bring the case to the law. In addition, all of the officers involved in the beating had been given disciplinary action of a twenty-one day suspension from work for one and a seven-day work suspension for another, as well as a one-year promotion suspension for each, but none was charged with breaking the penal law. On the other hand, while A.A.L. did not have to serve time in jail, the verdict will stay forever in his criminal record, and this is why the KPAI was strongly against the court's decision. Furthermore, that the court decided to "return" the boy to his parents for further education could be considered a disgrace to the parents as it implied that they did not do a good job in bringing up their son to be a law-abiding citizen. Similar to the punks' round-up in Aceh, the action taken by the police and the subsequent guilty verdict by the court on A.A.L. might serve as a message for youth that they were not exempted from state surveillance despite their age and, when deemed necessary, the state can intervene into their everyday life to put straightjackets on them and control what they can do as citizens. It is for these reasons that from time to time the state has to exert its power over youth by criminalizing them as it will show parents and society in general that there are no "domestic matters", such as child upbringing, that lie beyond the state's grasp.

As in both the case of Aceh's punks, and Sondang Hutagalung's, the state can assume a self-proclaimed status as the guardian of morality even when its moral standards and performance rate are being seriously questioned. In the wake of mass solidarity for A.A.L., Said Aqil Siradj, President of the Nahdatul Ulama (N.U.), the biggest Islamic organization in the country, issued a statement in Jakarta two days before the verdict was pronounced that the court had to base its decision on a humanitarian basis even if A.A.L. was to be found guilty. He could not accept the reasoning behind the five-year imprisonment for the theft of sandals, while corrupt officials only had to serve two to five years' time: "[…] that would be offensive. That would hurt our sense of humanity," he was reported to say.[45] An article that appeared on December 22, 2011 in an

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[44] "Kapolri janji kasus sandal jepit tak terulang", *Tempo.co*, Monday, January 9 (2012), in http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2012/01/09/063376159/Kapolri-Janji-Kasus-Sandal-Jepit-Tak-Terulang, accessed on February 23, 2012, 07.33pm.

[45] "Kalau pencuri sandal dihukum lebih berat dari koruptor itu menyakitkan", *Republika*, Monday, January 2 (2012), in http://id.berita.yahoo.com/kalau-pencuri-sandal-dihukum-lebih-berat-dari-koruptor-130556657.html, accessed on February 23, 2012, 07.47pm.

online media compared the case with two high-profile corruption cases that rocked the country a few years before. A former CEO of the state-owned electricity company (PLN, *Perusahaan Listrik Negara*) was sentenced only five years despite being proven guilty of stealing millions of dollars from the state. The other case involved SBY's co-parent-in-law, who was sentenced four years for illegally collecting more than a hundred million dollars from a banking foundation in 2003.[46] The article pointed out that such a blatant manipulation of justice was the main reason why people felt that the law had only been enforced on the weak and the poor, and that legal technicalities had prevailed over justice.[47]

One of the palace spokespersons, Julian Pasha, revealed that SBY had been keenly following the news about the "sandal boy" and was aware of the one-thousand-sandal movement at the grass-root level, but Pasha refrained from sharing with the press what the President thought about the case.[48] A lawyer pointed out that, from the start, the trial of the "sandal boy" had been marred with inconsistencies. For instance, the evidence put forward by the prosecutor against the boy was a pair of red "Ando" sandals size 9.5 supposed to belong to Officer Rusdi. However, the sandals that were claimed to be stolen in the police report were blue-colored "Eiger" size 43; yet the judges seemed to ignore this discrepancy. Besides, in their verdict they found A.A.L. guilty of taking other person's property, and there was no mentioning whatsoever that he stole Officer Rusdi's sandals.[49] The lawyer questioned why SBY remained silent when such blatant injustice took place, while a few years before the President had actively supported a young entrepreneur whose daughter was kidnapped by making an appeal that the abducted child be returned to her parents. In A.A.L.'s case, however, SBY seemed to hide behind his often repeated statement that he did not want to intervene in the due process of law. A.A.L's only hope lay on the President's intervention, but with SBY's inaction, the lawyer concluded that the state was practicing discrimination on its citizens.[50]

While the sandal boy's case has caused further loss of the law enforcement agencies' credibility in the eye of the public, it has also cost the state a deeper legitimacy crisis. The state begins to be viewed as the source of all economic, social and political

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[46] Hutabarat, "Hukum Indonesia: Antara pencuri sandal dan koruptor", *Kompasiana*, December 22 (2011), http://hukum.kompasiana.com/2011/12/22/hukum-indonesia-antara-pencuri-sandal-dan-koruptor/, accessed on February 23, 2012, 08.16pm.

[47] Ibid.

[48] "President ikuti kasus dugaan pencurian sandal jepit", *KOMPAS.com*, Wednesday, January 4 (2012), in http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2012/01/04/12102915/Presiden.Ikuti.Kasus.Dugaan.Pencurian.Sandal.Jepit, accessed on February 23, 2012, 08.35pm.

[49] Basakran, "Di manakah SBY, ketika A.A.L. divonis bersalah?" *kompasiana*, January 5 (2012), in http://hukum.kompasiana.com/2012/01/05/dimanakah-presiden-sby-ketika-aal-divonis-bersalah/, accessed on February 27, 2012, 03.03pm.

[50] Ibid.

problems currently faced by the nation, personified in particular by SBY and his apparatuses. At the same time, however, the state is trying to improve its deteriorating image by creating a new "enemy" in society in order to convince the public that it is combating a new threat in the form of attacks on morality and anti-social behavior that are specifically embodied by the young generation as a result of poor upbringing and lack of disciplining in the family. Youth serve as a fragile yet effective target of the state's politics of representation aiming at improving its public image, which demands the creation of an enemy to whom all of the social problems can be projected. In other words, the state is willing to accept the demonization of youth as a "collateral damage" in its fight to restore its legitimacy. This explains why in a very short span of time, between December 7, 2011 and January 4, 2012, the nation saw three different incidents involving youth and the state, in which youth seemed to become the culprits, or the source of the problems, as well as a new threat that had to be seriously dealt with by the whole country.

## Conclusion

This essay starts with a proposition that youth in post-New Order Indonesia have been perceived as a new enemy of the state and society, as the manners in which the state dealt with issues involving youth in the three case studies have indicated. Youth represent one of the most vulnerable segments of society that need state protection. However, similar to what have happened to women and low-income workers—who are also in need of protection because of their low bargaining power—in the history of post-colonial Indonesia, youth have been added to the list of the state's enemies. It does not take a lot of public convincing to achieve this objective as past experiences of youth resistance have contributed to the establishment of an association between youth and street rallies, violence, and moral diseases. The essay argues that the purpose of such tactics is to give the state an alibi for its failures in eradicating corruption, poverty and other kinds of social injustice, which have cost the state its political legitimacy. Finally, this essay attempts to demonstrate that the state tries to replace the depleting political legitimacy with a moral legitimacy that is gained through a representation of youth as public villains whose reckless actions may pose a serious threat to the nation's fundamental moral principles and values.

Nonetheless, as the essay tries to point out in the analysis, youth are not a monolithic group on which the state can simply apply the same strategies of stigmatization. All the three cases, despite their different anatomies and contexts, eventually put the state on the defensive position which, at some point, threatened to turn the table against the state and cause further loss of legitimacy. Therefore, the state's strategies of demonizing youth with the objective of restoring its moral ground in the public's eye do not always work as effectively as might have been initially expected. In fact, the continuing process of youth radicalization seems to be undaunted by the state's new stance against

them, as especially evident in Sondang Hutagalung's self-immolation, which has made him a "martyr" among youth and student activists. As youth and the general public become more critical towards the state and its apparatuses, there seems to be not much ground left for the state to justify itself. Finally, the increasing frequency of unrests and violence occurring in Indonesia in the last few years may be a signal for the emergence of anarchy, of which many social and political critics have issued their warnings about—warnings which have been met with a deaf ear by the government.

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# Cambodian Youth: Future Agents of Change?

*Sopheap Chak*

Since the end of hostilities in Cambodia, the situation for its citizens has improved greatly; however, the country is still dealing with a huge array of challenges—political, economic and social. A thriving civil society, engaged in politics, is an essential part of any democracy. As a country without a democratic tradition, this is something that the Cambodians have had to learn from scratch. An important element of any civil society is the engagement of the youth—it benefits both the youth, who feel that they are part of society, and society itself. Recent global events have also demonstrated the power of youths to instigate change. This article will study the problems in Cambodia and how they affect its youth in particular, before moving on to consider their capacity to influence the direction of their country.

Cambodia has the youngest population in South East Asia. According to 2012 population projections of Cambodia, there are approximately 4.7 million youths (aged 15-29 years) in Cambodia, which amounts to more than one-third of the entire population[1]. Such a large youth population has an enormous potential from a social and demographic point of view. It can reap a 'demographic dividend' providing a period of increased economic output, potentially lifting many Cambodians out of poverty. It also has the potential to inject dynamism and vitality into the nation's politics.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY CAMBODIAN YOUTH

### *Forced Evictions*

Forced evictions rank as one of Cambodia's most pervasive human rights problems. Since 2005, approximately 15% of the land in Cambodia has been sold to companies, roughly one-third of them foreign[2]. The Royal Government of Cambodia's system of Economic Land Concessions has led to large numbers of Cambodians being evicted from the land that they have lived on for their entire lives. The purchasing company should adequately compensate the displaced families for the loss of their land; however,

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[1] Population Projections of Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics 2011.

[2] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12152759

replacement plots are often unsuitable for accommodation. An estimated 10% of the city population has already been evicted from their homes since 1990, while basic infrastructure has yet to be installed at relocation sites.[3]

As well as being a serious violation of the residents' human rights, including the rights to development, adequate housing and access to public health services and schooling, these issues have a major effect on the youth. Regardless of whether suitable replacement residence is provided, the effect of forced eviction is the uprooting of entire communities, and the loss of community bonds and familiar pathways for the youth into employment. Where the youth may have followed in their parents' footsteps and taken on their careers, these opportunities are removed when communities are evicted from their land. The systematic land evictions, then, contributes to youth unemployment, discussed in more detail below.

A further effect of the evictions is that young people are being pushed in serfdom. Where previously they might have helped their families on a small subsistence farm, or with small-time trades and business, land concessions given to large agro-industrial enterprises mean that the youth have little choice but to work en masse in factories. Due to poor labour rights in Cambodia, this means working long hours in poor conditions. In being forced to take these jobs in order to survive, the youth are effectively being deprived of their freedom.

## *Restriction of Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media*

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right, essential to true democracy, which is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In spite of protection under the constitution, this right is frequently violated to silence critics—journalists and opposition politicians are frequently prosecuted—hindering the progress of democracy. The result of this is an atmosphere in which youths are deterred from participating in socio-political discussion due to fear of the consequences. To use a personal example, the author, as a result of outspoken blogging and criticism of government officials, received death-threat comments, and a number of advices from youth peers who considered this as a risky action, to stop writing. Such instances are not uncommon, and lead to an environment and culture in which people are cautious about expressing their views.

The media is also subject to a large degree of state control. Television, the most powerful medium, is tightly controlled by the RGC. All of Cambodia's eight television channels are aligned with the ruling Cambodian People's Party, and all news reports are politically biased towards the ruling party[4]. The Khmer language press is also heav-

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[3]  Chak Sopheap (8 December 2011), "Cambodia: Development Soaked in Women's Tears", http://futurechallenges.org/local/cambodia-development-under-women-tear/

[4]  Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, '*Freedom of Expression Briefing Paper*', 2009.

ily influenced by the RGC. Journalists are known to self-censor when dealing with particularly sensitive issues, for fear of the consequences of reporting on them. The youth, then, do not have ready access to a wide range of views or debate, which narrows their perspective on political discourse. The uptake and importance of new media, such as social media and blogging, to youth civic participation, is discussed later.

## *Corruption*

Corruption exists in all countries, but it has the most destructive effect in developing economies. In a poor country like Cambodia, which ranked 162nd out of 180 countries on a measure of corruption[5], it undermines social development and entrenches poverty. The selection process for new government officials is largely based on who the applicants are associated with, rather than their skills or knowledge. This leads to talented youths, who could provide an enormous resource for Cambodia's development, being ignored by the system. Even with a university education, Cambodian graduates find it difficult to obtain work if they do not possess the appropriate social connections. Such corruption leads to the youth having no faith in the system, which in turn leads to disaffection and despair.

## *Youth Unemployment*

The official youth unemployment rate in Cambodia is 3.3%[6]. However, this figure belies the difficulties faced by youths in the job market. With the absence of unemployment benefits and a welfare state, Cambodian youth do not have the luxury of waiting for the best job for them, and have to take anything that they can find as a matter of survival and providing for their families. Cambodian youths, female garment workers in particular, are often forced to work for long hours in poor conditions—a situation that has been highlighted by the mass faintings that are regularly reported in Cambodian factories[7]. Large numbers of Cambodian youths do not earn a living wage, that is, a wage that can satisfy basic needs as well as some discretionary income. This problem is compounded by recent global economic turmoil: wages have stayed the same, while food prices have soared. Discrimination is common in employment, with lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders often finding it even more difficult to find positions.

The lack of such a living wage among Cambodian youth has led to serious issues with migration and exploitation of Cambodian youth through trafficking. Reports of young, vulnerable Cambodians being tricked into a modern form of slavery are on the rise. Vulnerable Cambodians are lured into leaving the country to work, on the

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[5]  Transparency International, '*Corruption Index*', 2011.

[6]  Nation Institute for Statistics in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation, 'Labour and Social Trends', 2010.

[7]  http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/25/us-cambodia-faintings-idUSTRE77O2TC20110825 (Accessed 13 Feb 2012)

promise of good wages, before being trapped into forced labour. In November 2011, over 60 Cambodian men were rescued from a fishing boat in Malaysia[8]. Migration is a worldwide phenomenon in which Cambodia is no exception. Indebtedness and a lack of viable employment opportunities are commonly identified as the push factors causing many Cambodians to migrate to neighbouring countries including Thailand, Malaysia, and South Korea. The pull factors such as the high demand for less-skilled workers in 3D (dangerous, demanding, dirty) jobs in these countries converge with the prospect of high-paid employment and a better life, and the existence of established recruitment networks. As the 2010 CARAM ASIA report *"Remittances: Impact on Migrant Workers' Quality of Life"* states, it is estimated that between 1998 and the end of 2007 there were about 180,000 Cambodians working in Thailand, while a total of 10,532 Cambodian migrants were in Malaysia and 3,996 Cambodians had gone to South Korea. Most of these migrant are youths and even minors.

## *Education*

Youths are being let down by the education system in Cambodia. The central problem is that teachers are underpaid; they do not earn enough to cover their cost of living, let alone that of their dependents. 93% of teachers reported having to have a second job to supplement their teaching income[9]. This clearly distracts their attention from the classroom and leads to substandard teaching. Corruption is also rife in the education system; it is common practice for teachers to receive payment for releasing papers to exams students before the exams, or simply for attendance in class. Wealthier families can afford to pay the bribes; however, they result in children from poor families being excluded from the education system altogether.

## *Rule of Law*

The Cambodian People's Party has governed Cambodia, in one form or another, since 1979. In 1993 they were democratically elected. It works hard to stifle any opposition that it sees as a serious threat. The executive is widely known to exert control over the judiciary. It uses this influence to secure convictions of journalists and opposition politicians. The result is a judiciary which consistently tends to side with government interests. Members of government, its associates and corporations act with impunity. From land evictions to crime, security to road traffic accidents, a culture of impunity is pervasive in Cambodian life. There is a lack of faith in the judiciary to deal with cases fairly.

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8   http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2011111852834/National-news/trafficked-fishermen-rescued-in-indonesia.html

9   VSO International, *'Teaching Matters, A policy report on the motivation and morale of teachers in Cambodia', 2011*

## Potential of the youth of Cambodia as a force for change

### Civic Engagement

In 2010 the United Nations Development Programme conducted an in-depth study into youth civic participation, interviewing 2000 youths from across Cambodia.

Some commentators have suggested that the youth in Cambodia do not tend to play a large role in politics, citing the social tendency to defer to their elders and not to question the decisions of authority. In this regard, the study revealed a relatively healthy appetite for questioning authority. 51% of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'young people should not question decisions made by parents' and 58% disagreed with the statement that 'ordinary people should not question leaders' decisions'.

The study revealed a relatively low understanding of politics and political structures among Cambodian youth. While youths recognized terms such as parliament, democracy and human rights, few were able to explain the concepts. Actual participation levels were low, with just 8% having ever voiced their opinions to either government officials or NGO staff. This was similar at the commune level, with just 4% saying that they had been involved in decisions at this level. Of the respondents who were eligible to vote in the 2007 Commune Elections, 53% did not vote.

Taken together, these results appear to suggest a lack of awareness and engagement in politics. This is likely due to a combination of social values which encourage deference to elders and leaders and a lack of a political and civic education. This should not, however, be taken to suggest that there is no civic participation by Cambodian youth. The study also found a strong culture of volunteerism. Youths were capable of identifying problems in their communities and taking action to resolve them; however, this tended to be by taking practical action, rather than action at a policy level.

This commitment to volunteerism is demonstrated through groups such as 'Youth Fundraising for Charity'. Here, 40 youth volunteers arranged to raise money to help the victims of recent floods in Cambodia[10]. 'Youth Network for Change,'[11] is another example of youth participation for social development. The establishment of this youth network is to counteract development trends that traditionally focus only on urbanization and left the rural area to become prone to a lack of social infrastructure and interaction. Through its outreach programs, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives, this youth network aims to lift rural Cambodian youth out of poverty and into sustainable careers. It offers a platform where information and knowledge can be shared and also mobilizes youths to explore rural livelihood in order that collaborative efforts can be formed to lift community development.

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[10]  http://www.cambodiacircles.com/articles/24/raising-fund-for-the-victims-ra (Accessed 16th February 2012)

[11]  http://youthforchange.net/

## Social Media

The power of youth-led movements to instigate change has been brought into sharp focus in light of recent global events. Whilst some commentators have argued that the role of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, has been overstated in these events[12], there is no doubt that such new media played an important role. Through the use of social media, activists are able to present a different narrative to that presented by the state media. It provided a forum for people to exchange ideas and a means for activists to organize gatherings.

Change does not necessarily have to come in the form of a revolution, however. Take the recent Occupy movement that has swept across the Western world as an example. Here, youths from a broad variety of groups have taken over buildings and public areas in a number of cities across the world to launch a sustained protest. In doing so, they have ensured that their voice is heard in a way that could not be achieved with a traditional protest. Again, social media has played an important part in organizing, debating and exchanging ideas.

Social media is particularly valuable where the state has significant control over the media. It enables activists to quickly obtain information about situations, often including photos and video, and disseminate it rapidly to large numbers of people. Through doing this, they are able to challenge the narrative put forward by the state media. Social media is also far more interactive and versatile than the 'old media'; anyone with an internet connection or a 3G phone can use it to stimulate debate, organize and share information. It often has great power to promote gender equality, with females more comfortable to engage in debate and share ideas online than they may have been in face-to-face situations.

The internet penetration of Cambodia is low; according to the World Bank, just 0.5% of the population have an internet connection[13]. Internet use is on the rise, however, and it appears to be concentrated in the youth population. In the UNDP Report on Civic Participation, 6% of those interviewed had ever used the internet. The majority of this was through the use of smartphones. Population penetration of social media sites is low—for example, Facebook has a population penetration of 3.18%. While this is a small figure, it is growing at a very high rate—in the last six months, Facebook subscriptions in Cambodia increased by 26% to a total of 469,660.

As with general internet use, youth internet use is heavily skewed towards urban youths. According to the UNDP report, 13% of urban youths report that they have used the internet, compared to just 4% of rural youths. The lack of access to the internet generally, and in rural areas in particular, is an important issue. While access to the

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[12] See, for example, Lisa Anderson, '*Demystifying the Arab Spring*', Foreign Affairs, May/June 2011.

[13] http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=&REPORT_ID=9147&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED

internet is not itself currently recognized as a human right in Cambodia, it is a very important vehicle for freedom of expression and as such measures should be taken to ensure that the whole population has access to the internet.

Compared to the 'old media' in Cambodia, 'new media' such as online news, social networks and personal blogs are currently enjoying more freedom and independence from government censorship and restrictions. This may largely be because, with internet penetration so low, the RGC has yet to recognize the internet as a significant threat. There have, however, been several recent reports of blogs and websites being blocked[14].

For now, however, the web remains a place for those Cambodians who do have internet access to communicate, debate and organize. A number of websites and blogs are disseminating news, entertaining the public and serving as a platform for political, economic and social discussions.

Personal blogging is popular in Cambodia. Most bloggers are aged between 20-29 and are well educated. The majority of blogs are about personal experiences, rather than commentary on political events;[15] however, there are a number of political blogs and websites available to Cambodian youth. KI-Media Blogspot, for example, is run by Cambodians both inside and outside of the Kingdom. It is '*dedicated to publishing sensitive information about Cambodia*'. It is worth noting that a number of blog causes have also emerged, such as "*Prey Lang – It's Your Forest Too*,"[16] a blog to provide public updates on some of their activities like prayer ceremonies and leaflet distribution to save the endangered forest.

## *Youth Initiatives*

In addition to the small, but growing, forum for debate online, Cambodian youth are also arranging physical meetings to debate and share ideas, often facilitated by the existence of online communities.

An example of this is the TEDx Phnom Penh conference. This is a local, self-organized event, modelled on the Technology, Entertainment and Design conferences held annually in Long Beach, California, which began in Phnom Penh in February 2011. The speakers are social icons who have been inspired by and are inspiring others' life stories.

A similar series of events has occurred through the KhmerTalks, a platform that was inspired by the TEDx Phnom Penh series. There are monthly meetings with prominent individuals who are interested in sharing and learning from each other's ideas and

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[14]  The Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, '*Internet Censorship: The Ongoing Crackdown on Freedom of Expression in Cambodia*', June 2011.

[15]  Department of Media and Communication, "*Empowering Cambodian Women psychologically through Blogging*", December 2010, in "*Cambodia Communications Review 2010*", p. 18.

[16]  Prey Lang is the "largest primary lowland dry evergreen forest remaining both in Cambodia and on the Indochinese Peninsular," http://ourpreylang.wordpress.com/

to form projects of common interest. The first launch of a full KhmerTalk meeting was held in June 2011 where approximately 200 Cambodian youths participated. The event is hosted and supported by the Khmer Young Entrepreneurs, a group of young emerging Cambodian leaders who advocate 'personal empowerment'.

The low level of participation in the political aspects of civil society, as revealed by the UNDP report, coupled with the low uptake of new media as a forum for debate would seem to suggest that, at present, the youth of Cambodia have only a limited capacity to participate in civil society and bring about change. There are highly encouraging signs of improvement, however.

The low level of participation in the political aspects of civil society is probably the result of many factors. With limited access to anything other than pro-government media, the youth's perspectives on politics are limited. Further, there is a lack of political and human rights education available to young people, which does not serve to raise their awareness of these issues. There are several projects which set out to remedy this. For example, a recently commenced joint venture between the BBC and the UNDP, which through television drama, talk shows and online platforms aimed at 15-24 year olds, will seek to encourage youths to learn, debate and share civic participation experiences.[17] Cambodian youth are engaged in civic society; however, due to social norms this tends to be through practical means rather than at a policy level. Cambodians care deeply for their community and their country—this provides an important starting point for increasing the youth's political engagement.

With regard to the low level of social media use, encouragement can be taken from the vibrant and dynamic way in which the internet is used by those Cambodians who do have access to the internet. As internet use increases, we can expect activity like this to increase with it. In order to nurture this, it is important that the internet remains free from state control—pressure should be put on the RGC to prevent any hindrances.

Youth-led organizations such as TEDx Phnom Penh and the KhmerTalks are also a source of encouragement. It shows that Cambodian youth are organizing events themselves to debate and exchange ideas.

## Conclusion

While at present large numbers of the youth lack the tools and the knowledge to instigate change, this is not through a lack of desire or motivation. Rather it is due to a low level of understanding of the political system. Education on these issues must be improved in order to nurture and develop the already existing appetite for helping in the community into fully-fledged political civic participation. New media has the potential to be a huge facilitator in this transition; however, it is absolutely crucial that

[17]  http://www.beta.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/articles/2012/01/18/cambodia-bbc-undp-launch-campaign-to-boost-youth-civic-engagement.html (Accessed on 14 February 2012)

it remains the free and open forum for discussion that it is today. With the focus so often on economic development, young Cambodians can play a crucial part in the social development. The youths of Cambodian are dynamic, enthusiastic and keen to play a meaningful part in society and to develop their country—it is essential that they are provided with the right tools to do so.

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# Unleashing the Power of the Youth in the Philippines

*Lesley Jeanne Y. Cordero*

In the Philippines, we pride ourselves with what our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, said, that "the youth is the hope of the fatherland." Year in and year out, we see young people attending lectures and dialogues on youth issues and concerns. We also witness youth leaders organizing youth development programs to further the advocacies of the youth. On election years, you hear politicians and candidates boasting about their youth movement and talking about the youth agenda. Today, the Philippines has been facing the same problems as it has been dealing with for decades now. The same youth issues and concerns are still being bannered by youth leaders and activists for generations now. So the real questions are: Are we really serious in solving the issues facing our young people today? Are we committed to unleashing the real power of the youth in the Philippines? And how are we planning to do this?

## A Testimony of Youthful Idealism and Passion

They always say that the character of a nation is defined by the kind of young people it has produced. The Philippines will be judged by the kind of young people it has nurtured to be competent individuals who can ably compete in the global arena. With a barometer like this, the country needs development programs for the youth that can transform a generation's mindset and culture. We need sustainable programs that can instil hope in young people—to inspire us to be catalysts of change, to teach us not to settle for less when we can do more, and to make all of us believe that we have a hand in creating the kind of society and country that we envision.

No one should discount the passion and idealism of the youth in the Philippines. The Filipino youth is one of the most determined and committed sector in society who will fight for what is right and true. I can still distinctly recall: during my university days, how passionate the youth leaders and students were when we talk about student issues such as increases in school fees and tuition. We also rant and raved about academic freedom, the right to quality education, and employment issues. We found ourselves going from classroom to classroom talking about issues that we felt strongly about. We

were actively involved in campus politics and participated in university elections for the student government. We organized talks and fora that dealt with youth advocacies and concerns. We conducted educational campaigns and information drives on issues that young people should care about. Those experiences were defining moments in my life because it was a genuine display of youthful idealism and passion at its purest.

At present, you can still find the same passion and idealism of youth leaders and student activists in schools and campus organizations. They talk of the same issues and concerns; they share the same passions and values; and the idealism is as strong as ever. However, the young people nowadays use different modes and means of showing their idealism and passion. Technology has made young people express these passions and core beliefs through social media and alternative ways. You hear and see their views and perspectives through their exchanges in Facebook, Twitter, and blog sites. Young people today take their causes and advocacies to the internet. Cyberspace has become their playground and they are really getting good at making older people listen to their issues through the internet.

This is a testimony that youth leaders and activists might change from one generation to another. The forms of activism, the modes of participation and involvement, and the means of sending their messages across may also change from time to time. But the idealism, passion, and determination of the youth remain the same. One should never discount the contribution that young people can give. One should never undermine the power of the youth in nation-building. And one should never underestimate the heart of a youth leader and champion.

## Tapping the Untapped Potential of the Filipino Youth

Approximately 57.9% of the population is considered as youth at present based on the Philippine Census. Under Philippine laws[1], youth is defined as those within the age range of 15 to 30 years old. This is a vast resource that remains untapped. The potential of getting them involved in crucial policies and programs of government and the community should be explored. Community and grassroots organisations should not only be limited to farmers, women, fisher folks, senior citizens, or people with disabilities but should also capitalize on the youth sector. Issues on education, employment, health, environment, politics, economy, and governance should also be put front and center by young people. Government and non-government organizations should also strategically invest in the potential of the Filipino youth by training and preparing them to be leaders in the future. It will be a disservice to the country if we expect so much from our youth leaders and yet we do not involve them in the decision-making process of society. There is so much hope and promise among the Filipino youth. They are the most active sector in society right now and the country will benefit so much if we start tapping

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[1] Republic Act No. 8044, Youth in Nation-Building Act of 1995, June 7, 1995.

the potential of the youth sector. It is high time for the public and private sectors to formally involve and nurture the potentials and talents of the Filipino youth.

## Consolidating the Youth Vote

Concretely, there are 93 million Filipinos and out of this total population there is an estimated 51.23 million registered voters according to the Commission on Elections records. Half of the total number of registered voters fall under the category of youth voters[2] in the Philippines. There is an estimated 27 million young Filipinos whose votes can dictate the country's top leaders and change the phase of governance in the Philippines. However, the country has never produced a successful youth-led political party, a youth-supported candidate, and a youth agenda. In the history of Philippine elections, there has never been a consolidated youth vote. The Filipino youth has never been a crucial factor nor a swing vote in elections. Politicians and candidates talk about the significance of young people and claim to be champions of the youth. But never have we experienced an election that was decided by the youth.

It is crucial to seriously revisit the reasons why in the exercise of democracy in the Philippines and in the overwhelming constancy of the youth population in the country, there was never a consolidated youth vote. Politicians do not take the young people seriously because they have not shown that they are a strong and solid block with real youth platforms of action. Young people have not organized themselves to present a real youth agenda that will merit the attention of candidates and politicians. During national and local elections, you see young people volunteering for campaigns, organizing youth forum for the candidates, going door-to-door with brochures and campaign materials, and actively campaigning in social network sites. But never have we made the concrete concerns of the youth a real Philippine Youth Agenda that candidates should consider. Perhaps it is time to organize and regroup the youth organizations to transform them into a sector that will be taken seriously—one that will no longer be conveniently used and abused by politicians, and a group that will be a major player in the upcoming elections.

## Crafting a Solid Youth Agenda

In the Philippines, we have a National Youth Commission under the Office of the President.[3] It is the sole policy and coordinating body in charge of youth issues and concerns. But it does not have enough teeth to be genuinely involved in policy-making and to rally the support of various youth organizations and groups all over the country.

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[2]  Comelec Information on eligible Youth Voters (18 to 33 years old) category, 2010 Presidential Elections.

[3]  RA No. 8044 Youth in Nation-Building Act of 1995.

There is a need to strengthen the mechanism of the Youth Commission to be able to address the issues facing the youth at all levels of representation in the country.

There is also the *Sangguniang Kabataan* under the Local Government Code[4] of the Philippines created in 1991. It is a youth organizational network that exists in the *barangays* (villages), the most basic political unit of Philippine society. They are elected as local officials in the villages to represent youth issues and concerns. But the age of these elected youth officials ranges from 15 to 18 years old. Apart from these existing structures, there are laws that provide for youth participation and involvement in policy-making. However, in practice, the opinions of the youth do not bear so much weight when adults start dominating the discussions.

It is high time for the Filipino youth to get their acts together and start crafting a solid youth agenda that society will take seriously. Youth leaders from all over the Philippines should come together and agree on basic youth issues and concerns that they want to put front and center. In discussions and dialogues, young people should be aware of the key advocacies that they need to prioritize and push for. Be it education, employment, health, environment, equality, or security, the youth should have a well-defined youth agenda and platform of action. Young people should learn that not all youth concerns can be discussed and solved immediately. They have to come together to choose key youth issues that are inclusive, rally support for these issues, and learn to lobby professionally to get what they want. It will be good to institutionalize a youth counterpart unit in political parties that will really consolidate youth issues and concerns. This will be a vehicle that will help promote the youth agenda during elections and thereafter.

## Investing in the Filipino Youth

Investing in the Filipino Youth is a winning option. There is no losing when you choose to invest in the passion, idealism, and heart of young Filipinos. Their limitless potential will allow you to surpass whatever targets and goals you have set for the country. The Filipino youth as future leaders and catalysts for change will redefine the course of Philippine history and propel the country to greater heights. We just need the leaders of today to invest in the leaders of tomorrow. The country needs to promote youth programs and policies that are relevant and will help shape the leaders of the future. We need a generation of young people with the character, integrity, and credibility to lead the country. We need youth leaders who do not only want to make a difference but who imagine that they really can.

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4   Republic Act No. 7160, The Local Government Code of the Philippines, 1991.

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# Youth and Climate Change in Asia

*Lee Chean Chung*

Climate change has raised concerns amongst the public throughout the world in the past decades. Environmental problems pose numerous threats to the public in the Asia Pacific region and this region is arguably the most vulnerable region to the effects of climate change.

A larger-than-ever number of young people are turning into adults due to the remarkable economic growth and baby boom in recent years. According to statistics gathered in mid-2010, approximately 1,001 million people aged 15 to 29 are living in Asia, constituting 25.83% of the total population in the region.[1]

This generation are likely to be affected by the deteriorating environmental standards and they could possibly be the victims of the environmental disaster we cause today.

It is time to look into the possibilities and potentials of youth in addressing climate change. This article attempts to evaluate the roles of young people in the Asia Pacific in tackling climate change and, to a broader extent, other environmental issues.

## Climate Change and Asia

We, especially those of us who live in Asia, know a lot about the impacts of climate change.

Asia, where most countries are still developing, should not be exempted from being responsible for climate change because Asia Pacific countries have been the world's largest consumers of the world's resources since the mid-1990s. If current trends continue, their $CO_2$ emissions are likely to triple by 2050.[2]

It is reported that climate change has started to threaten the development in the region and could put agricultural production and food safety at risk by the 2020s. According to Eric Hall, the spokesperson of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, coastal cities like Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila and Shanghai are increasingly vulnerable to a rise of sea level and unpredictable weather patterns.

High poverty rate, lack of financial capital and technological knowledge and the incompetency of governmental institutions make matters worse. A report released by Asian Development Bank (ADB) in April 2009 has shown that Southeast Asian

economies could lose as much as 6.7% of combined annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2100, more than twice the global average, due to global warming.[3]

The trend is even more alarming now. On 4 May 2012, ADB warned that the countries in the region must take immediate action to stop climate change. The President of ADB, Haruhiko Kuroda, issued a warning in his statement:

> *"We are increasingly using resources at the cost of environment; unless we change, the hard-won gains in reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for Asian people could be reversed".[4]*

Climate change poses threats, not only to the environment, but also to society and political stability. Both inter-governmental organizations and local governments are finding it tough to cope with increasingly complex and multi-level issues.

Civil societies realise that there is a need for trans-boundary cooperation in dealing with this issue. The increased awareness and willingness of local people to participate in environmental activism have made us believe that transnational movement can bring about greater achievements.

The lack of nation-state actors in environmental issues has opened up numerous opportunities for different parties to participate in environmental activism. As the largest demographic group in Asia, young people should not be passive observers but should take a more active role in fighting climate change.

## Youth and Climate Change

How can youth be more effectively integrated as individuals and collective agents of change within the realm of climate change adaptation and mitigation?

In essence, mitigation is defined in the context of climate change as a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases, whereas adaptation refers to the measures taken in response to climate change, to reduce the adverse impacts or to take advantage of opportunities offered by such changes.

The failure of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2009 has facilitated a paradigm shift—from an exclusive emphasis on mitigation to the recognition that the simultaneous development and implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as mainstreaming of climate change measures into development planning, is inevitable.

Certainly, youths have strong vested interest as a worsened environment could cause greater inter-generational injustice to them. I would also like to challenge the myth that Asian cultural values emphasize respect and obedience toward authority and older individuals. It is suggested that young people in Asia can play the roles of **agents of information** and **agents of change**, as evidenced in various movements such as the Tiananmen incident in 1989, Arab Spring in 2011 and BERSIH rally (to advocate for Free, Fair and Clean election) in Kuala Lumpur recently.

I have also mentioned earlier that youths today have greater control over many issues, as they are better educated and more empowered compared with previous generations. Statistics show that as of 31 December 2011, internet users in Asia passed the 1 billion-mark, and comprised 44.8% of the world's internet users. Facebook users also reached 195 million, despite China's ban on the most popular social media in the world.[5]

Let's put this in the context of booming young internet users in Asia—youths that are internet savvy can utilize this powerful tool to disseminate important and useful climate change information more effectively today.

Based on recent development of activism around Asia, it is not surprising to see the rise of social media and how it has played a critical role in mobilising, empowering, shaping opinions and influencing change. More and more environmental protests are organized via social media and have achieved remarkable outcome, e.g., the 'Green Protest' on 26 Feb 2012 to reject the world's largest rare earth processing plant has attracted more than 20,000 people to gather in a small town in East Coast Malaysia. Undoubtedly, it is clear that internet mobilization has played an effective role in attracting large groups of youngsters to participate and be integrated as collective agents in environmental movements.

Similarly, climate change is a relatively new issue to Asians. Public perceptions are vital to bringing the issue and measures to the mainstream, and simply changing perceptions can encourage voluntary mitigation by individuals engaging in more sustainable, low-carbon lifestyle choices. As **agents of information**, youths can participate by means of generating contents, making videos, sharing information, and creating pre-event activities etc. to increase visibility of the issue.

Apart from that, we should also realize that there are more efforts required beyond internet activism and mere carrier/creator of information. As **agents of change**, youths should participate enthusiastically in regional, national, provincial and local spheres as adaptation measures of climate change are usually developed at those levels.

Youths should demonstrate how personal actions feed into environmental movements and, in turn, affect policy-making in education, environmental, regulatory, enforcement and other fields. There are numerous civic engagement strategies that can be creatively deployed to close the information and action gaps, starting with volunteering, participating in a community initiative, exchanging knowledge, blogging, protesting in innovative ways by using cultural performance as a vehicle for dissent, activist networking and organizing.

In a broader context, youths must realise the fact that climate change environmental issues cannot be separated from questions of social justice—that there is no contradiction between addressing environmental issues and social inequalities. Gone are the days when climate change and environment are seen as ring-fenced and isolated

subjects. The concern about climate change will eventually lead to the debate on the rights of ethnic minorities, lower socio-economic status groups and gender.

After all, climate change is a humanity issue. The cost of being wrong on global warming is too high a price to pay for the commonwealth of humanity and the Earth. Youth, being the emerging prominent group, has the obligation to ensure a unified approach towards managing global warming, one that makes economic sense while at the same time is ethical and moral.

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### Endnotes

1  http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/asia-pacific/facts/

2  http://www.eco-business.com/news/asian-countries-told-to-reduce-climate-changes-negative-impacts/

3  http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/06/17/us-climate-asia-idUSTRE55G22T20090617

4  http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=803426&publicationSubCategoryId=63

5  http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

# Whither Autocracy?
# The Arab Revolt One Year On

*James M. Dorsey*

If 2011 was the Year of Defiance, it was also the year that called experts' credibility into question. Common wisdom was that Arabs were either too wealthy or too afraid to demand change; Russians were apathetic and had a weak spot for the concept of a neo-czar; India's middle class was politically too disengaged; West Europeans were too old; Americans were oblivious to differences of class and Chinese party apparatchiks too effective at repressing dissent.

2011 has proved all of that wrong. It demonstrated that deeply felt discontent was not only widespread but that youths were willing and able to assert themselves in powerful and often new ways.

As a result, government officials, analysts and journalists somewhat disingenuously fawned surprise when the Arab revolt erupted in Tunisia in December 2010. As did US President Barak Obama when he asked his director of Central Intelligence why he had not been forewarned that protests that would rewrite the map of the Middle East and North Africa were about to erupt.

In the immediate aftermath of the Al Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001, government officials from then US President George W. Bush down, think tanks pundits and the media blamed the attacks on widespread discontent with repressive rule in the Middle East. That assumption was reinforced by recognition that a policy that gave priority to stability by supporting autocratic regimes rather than to the ideals of dignity, justice and economic opportunity that are fuelling the revolt had created the circumstances that made the 9/11 attacks possible.

In response, much attention was focused in the wake of 9/11 on the Arab street, the code word for public opinion in the Middle East and North Africa. The expectation was that the primarily young Arab street would express its aspirations. Attention for the street diminished when it did not live up to the expectations of officials, analysts and journalists who began to deride those who stressed the need to be more attentive to Arab public opinion. Like the autocratic regimes against whom they revolted, Western officials, analysts and journalists wrote off a whole generation and class.

In reality however, while the change in mood in Western capitals was a reaction to the fact that the Arab street did not conform to the West's time frame, nothing on the ground had changed. Pent-up anger and frustration hadn't withered. On the contrary, it continued to fester and boil at the surface. It was noticeable to anyone who put his ear to the ground or visited a stadium where youths organized as militant, highly politicised, street-battle hardened soccer groups expressed dissent and confronted security forces almost weekly. The only thing that was not predictable was what would cause that anger to boil over and when that might happen.

Indeed, the writing was on the wall. Dubai-based public relations firm ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller concluded from a 2011 survey of Arab youth that more than 90 per cent of those interviewed gave priority to living in a democratic country. This was unsurprising especially in a region where 60 per cent of the population is below the age of 30 and more than 200 million people are affected by key social problems such as unemployment, a rising cost of living and frustration at the lack of direct political participation in government. With 70 per cent of the 18 to 24 year-old interviewees in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations—Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman—as well as in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, attributing significant importance to the notion of global citizenship and identifying themselves as part of a global system of fully engaged globalists, Arab youths were repositioning themselves as empowered citizens rather than subjects.

Disregard for the aspirations of Arab youth prompted the World Bank to warn in a study months before the eruption of the Arab revolt that "not investing in young people, in particular not creating the required jobs for them, will make youth more vulnerable and at risk of being marginalised, creating generations of idle citizens…subject to negative societal phenomena and will require substantially higher investments to recover." By the time the World Bank had issued its warning, the damage had already been done.

As a result, it should have been clear from the outset that once Tunisian fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi's suicide on the doorstep of the governor's office after being trapped in a bureaucratic merry-go-round went viral, his cry was not simply one for justice, freedom and economic opportunity but, first and foremost, an act of desperation in the face of humiliation, a cry for dignity that resonated with the masses across the region as well as around the globe.

From Buenos Aires to Beijing and from New York to Cairo the outcry was against the indignity of crony capitalism and neo-liberalism which ensured that rules were rigged in favour of more often than not corrupt Middle Eastern elites and to the disadvantage of the lower and middle classes. For Bouazizi and the millions in the Middle East and North Africa whom he inspired, it was the daily humiliation and police brutality meted out by repressive autocratic officials and their cronies that dominated their ordinary lives. For Americans the equivalent was the US Troubled Asset Relief Program designed to bail out troubled financial institutions widely seen as responsible

for the current financial crisis and for Indians the corrupt telecommunications license auctions.

Theirs is a massive denunciation of years of political and institutional decay. They voice long-standing criticism of the status quo as well as the generational desire for political change and safeguards against arbitrary state-sponsored violence and repression rather than the expression of new ideas. At times, the denunciation is preceded by the emergence of political groupings that are as much characterized by discontent with the status quo as they are by ideology. In Egypt it was Kefaya (Enough) that pioneered the use of social media, mastered the art of symbolic demonstrations and carved out space in the media; in the United States it was the Tea Party, a populist and libertarian movement that advocates the return to original interpretations of the US Constitution; in Europe significant segments of the electorate turned towards far right-wing and green political parties.

In virtually all cases—Occupy Wall Street, the anti-Putin demonstrations in Russia and the series of revolts sweeping the Middle East and North Africa—the instigators were more often than not young, middle class and educated or semi-skilled labour with no prior political affiliations, driven by a globally shared perception that their political and economic systems were broken. Unlike the countercultural 1968 student manifestations, protesters have in 2011 far more at stake. And unlike the 1989 demise of communism their protests are sparked by a sense of disintegration across society, not just at the system's nerve center. Perhaps the best historic comparison for 2011 as a Year of Defiance is the 1848 Paris revolt that abolished the monarchy and established the French republic. Like in 1848 when a small act of protest mushroomed into a mass movement fuelled by technological advances such as telegraphy, railroads and printing presses, today's protests are enabled by the Internet, social media and technology that circumvents censorship.

In the Arab world, it was the cannon fodder—the Mohamed Bouazizis or disenfranchised shabab (youth)—that lost the most blood in revolts and displayed the most bravery because they had the least to lose. Often the products of impoverished Arab provincial towns and popular quarters in major cities, they feel empowered by their success in overthrowing an autocratic leader or their resilience in standing up to brute force, yet remain socially and politically marginalised.

Rebellion and contentious street politics is what they know as they demonstrated in the years of clashes in soccer stadiums with security forces and ever more violent street battles on Cairo's Tahrir Square in the year since the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak. Few conceive of joining a political party to ensure that the goals of their revolt are achieved. To them, political parties, leaders and electoral politics create opportunity for corruption.

Leaderless and committed to contentious rather than electoral politics they constitute a potent threat to authority, an uncontrollable mass that has cast off its shackles of

fear and is not prone to deal-making. This lack of fear and sense of confidence displayed by Arab protesters is not unique to the Middle East and North Africa. That same sense of surety was visible in August 2011 as protesters in Britain's Enfield poured out of cars and trains and continued to mill in groups after being dispersed by police. Nonetheless, leaderless confidence is likely to ultimately also prove the protesters' greatest weakness and ultimate marginalization and downfall. In doing so, they become the catalyst of change but not its enforcer.

Repeated vicious street battles in the past year in which scores were killed and thousands wounded between youth and soccer fan groups once revered for their fearlessness and key role in toppling Mubarak and security forces highlight the growing gap between Egyptian public opinion and the activists. A majority of protest-weary Egyptians eager to see their almost bankrupt country return to normalcy and economic growth have come to see the youth and soccer fan protests in support of an end to military rule and the dismantling of the Mubarak as an obstacle to progress.

"Our young people would not have reached this feeling of desperation, if they had not been abandoned by others, who, a year ago joined them in celebrating the toppling of the Mubarak regime. Although they shared the same aspiration that this moment would be the start of building a free, democratic and progressive country, the majority of the Egyptians seem not to have the strong will and persistence to continue the momentum until their dream comes true," said Manal Abdul Aziz in a passionate plea for the protesters in *The Egyptian Gazette*.

In some ways, the youth and soccer groups—often founded by educated, highly-politicized students and professionals, many of whom proclaimed themselves anarchists—were victims of their own success. Their ranks swelled with thousands of less-educated, disaffected and often unemployed youths motivated less by politics than by a desire to assert their dignity by repaying the security forces for the years of abuse and mistreatment.

As a result, Arab revolts could like numerous revolutions in the past result in greater continuity rather than in change. The lesson is one that activists in the Arab world are learning: de jure change in political institutions does not necessarily involve a change in the underlying distribution of economic power. Elites are often sufficiently resilient to reverse change or at the very least mould it in their favour. That is the backdrop to Egypt's stumbling from crisis to crisis.

The Cairo neighbourhood of Bulaq, one of the city's oldest quarters near Tahrir Square, highlights the issue in a nutshell. Bulaq joined the anti-Mubarak protests last year demanding an end to the police brutality and forced evictions they had suffered for 40 years under the ousted president and his predecessor Anwar Sadat. The residents of Bulaq constitute part of the majority of Cairo residents who live in sprawling areas that expanded without any planning. Once Cairo's commercial port and home to the city's

wealthier families, Bulaq today is synonymous with collapsed homes and desperate living conditions. It is a community under continuous threat from the authorities.

The government saw Bulaq as the ideal place to showcase Egypt's integration with the global economic system by developing it into a business district. To that end, the government forced residents to relocate to concrete apartment blocks in new developments on the desert fringes of Cairo. The struggle for resident's rights is one that the neighbourhood's youth inherited from their parents.

The revolt in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world is and was about the people of Bulaq and their battle against crony capitalism. As was the case with many Egyptians, the revolt against Mubarak gave the people of Bulaq hope. Yet little has changed in Bulaq since the fall of Mubarak. As a result, an increasingly frustrated community waits in anticipation for the uprising to produce real change.

The initial success of Arab youth seeking to throw off the yoke of authoritarian rule fed on their governments' inability to respond in a timely and adequate fashion to their grievances. They were strengthened by the fact that governments failed to recognize that transparency-enhancing technology and communication tools have transformed them from isolated and ignorant subjects into informed and empowered citizens. New technology meant that the ability of citizens, and particularly of youth groups, to challenge authority was no longer dependent on having an established leader. In fact, these groups often chose more amorphous, seemingly leaderless structures.

They capitalized on their command of technology and new media, organizational skills and popular discontent to mobilize large groups of people and influence reporting on mainstream television news, by far the largest influencer of public opinion. The ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller survey concluded that Internet and social media had made inroads across the Middle East and North Africa but that penetration in many nations with the notable exception of the Gulf remained low. Egypt, for example, a country of 81 million saw Internet penetration rise from 4.3 million in November 2010 to 5.65 million in March 2011, a mere seven per cent of the population. That is to some degree a deceptive figure with penetration measured by number of computers per head of the population rather than access to the Internet. When measured by access, it emerges that two thirds of Egyptian youth, a majority of the population, log on to the Internet daily, often on computers shared with friends and family or in Internet cafés and offices.

That is not to say that social media were not an important driver of the revolts. However, rather than serving directly as a tool to communicate with and mobilize significant segments of society, social media created needed space and political cover for mainstream television news to report on the uprisings and amplify the protesters' message. With other words, it was the convergence of social and traditional media that empowered pan-Arab and mainstream media. It was a message that was lost on autocratic regimes that ineptly established an online presence of their own in a bid

to intimidate and silence dissenting voices rather than engage with them. It was an approach incapable of matching the youth activists' command of the new technology.

Youth activists nonetheless understood that social media do not constitute a substitute for mobilization's need for personal contact and affinity. They embraced social media as platforms that thrive on weak ties between users and a vague sense of communality that is based on the smallest common denominator. They recognized that it streamlined communications among themselves and with the world at large and if anything enhanced the need for personal contact.

Studies in US civil rights movement's Freedom Summer college dropouts, Italy's Red Brigades of the 1970s, the US-backed anti-Soviet Afghan mujahedeen of the 1980s, East German demonstrators who brought down the Berlin Wall in 1989 and Arab youths seeking to gain control of their future nonetheless show that many became activists because of a personal connection in the form of a relative or friend who was already involved. Social media have not altered that pattern. It took four months of civil war in Libya, for example, for members of the country's national soccer team to join the NATO-backed rebels and they only did so after friends and family had been killed in the fighting by forces loyal to ousted Libyan leader Moammar Qaddafi.

This however does not mean that governments, security forces and politicians can continue with business as usual. Governments, security forces and politicians have at their own peril been slow to realize that new media have fundamentally changed the communications paradigm and significantly enhanced transparency. If control and occupying the high ground was the name of the game in traditional communications, it is engagement in the era of social media. Enhanced transparency means that autocrats increasingly are unable to operate behind a wall of secrecy.

New media allowed Tunisian activist Sami Ben Gharbia to reveal shopping trips to Paris made by the wife of ousted President Zine el Abedine Ben Ali that fuelled the protests against his regime. Google Earth enabled Bahrainis to get a sense of the vast tracts of land that had been expropriated by the minority Sunni ruling family. Cell phone video technology allowed ordinary Egyptians to record police abuse and identify the perpetrators. Bloggers ensured that the videos were widely distributed. If command of technology is the activists' strength, their weakness is lack of leadership and the fact that post-revolt societies grow protest weary with large segments of the population frustrated that there is no immediate economic benefit from the toppling of the autocrat.

Pre-and post-revolt Arab governments face the momentous task of having to create 51 million jobs by 2020, according to the Arab League and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Failure to do so will nurture the feeding ground for continued agitation as youth stripped of its fear and emboldened by the initial power of the square, forcefully put forward demands for real change. This, coupled with the fact that more nations in the Middle East and North Africa are likely to be swept into the

maelstrom of popular uprisings, promises a decade of volatility and uncertainty, one in which emboldened and empowered youth are unlikely to back down.

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# EUROPE

# Youth and Participation in Europe

*Johann de Rijke*

Young people in Europe 2012—problems of education and choosing a profession, periods of unemployment, wide variations among different countries, activities and exchanges beyond national borders and demonstrations in European metropolises come to mind. At the core of discussions are social issues, criticism of government measures (for example, in Spain or Greece) and of modern banking systems ("occupy" movement), or vehement broad high-publicity actions against "Acta" ("Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement") by a "Generation Internet". All this is initiated Europe-wide and draws responses from all over Europe. On the other hand, Europe can meanwhile be regarded as a region of opportunities and options for youths, as an actual "Easy-Jet Europe" (Timothy Garton Ash), threats to which could lead to Europe-wide mobilizations.

Such events are recurring topics in the media. Another question of interest is whether structures of differentiation of youth activity among the 27 member states of the European Community exist. In the following article, this question is being explored. Based on Europe-wide surveys conducted with young people, this article provides an outline of youth participation, including relevant background information and a brief overview of youth unemployment in Europe as a central issue affecting the lives of youths.

## 1. The 3 Forms of Participation

There are three different forms of participation in society (for more details see Gaiser and de Rijke 2010; Gaiser and de Rijke 2010a; Gaiser et al. 2010 using Germany as an example).

The *first form* of participation occurs in the context of the traditional institutionalized areas of the "intermediate system", i.e., large organizations and associations. These organizations are regarded as crystallized institutions of interests; they are functionally structured and require membership. Membership and collaboration are mostly long-term with a relatively high level of loyalty or strong instrumental links. This group includes, in particular, political parties and large organizations representing the interests of certain groups of society, such as trade unions, professional associations, charities, etc. It also includes associations and organizations which represent the

general interests of citizens and which due to their organizational structure, are relevant to the public, such as sports clubs or youth associations.

The *second form* of participation are informal groups, initiatives and organizations, such as environmental groups, peace movement groups, citizens' groups and support groups. Such groups developed in the 1970s and 1980s outside parliaments and established politics, and as forms of a "New Social Movement", they were placed in a separate category. They are less rigidly structured and less traditional in terms of their organizational history.

The *third form* refers to situational, one-time actions, in particular political actions, which serve to express political goals in the context of a specific, temporary situation. Such actions can be further differentiated in terms of conventionality or legality (as usually done in political participation research); however, this will not be dealt with in this article.

## 2. Young People in Europe—Grouped According to EU-Member States

The studies to which the following results refer, in particular "Young Europeans" dated 2007 and "Youth on the Move" dated 2011, are surveys conducted in all (since 2007) 27 EU-countries. In order to present the data more clearly, the various countries were arranged in groups. A common and, in terms of EU-expansion history, sensible differentiation is between the EU-countries before the major Southeast expansions of 2004 and 2007, i.e. a total of 15 member states, and the 12 countries of the East-expansion. This expansion by countries of the former Eastern Bloc (including the smaller countries Malta and Cyprus) comprises countries with diverse cultural and national backgrounds. The EU-member states before 2004 can be differentiated in terms of geographical and cultural similarities. According to Gabriel and Völkl (2008), whose approach is adopted here, the following groups of countries are used in this article:

- Northern Europe: Denmark, Finland, Sweden.

- Western Europe: United Kingdom, Ireland.

- West-Central Europe: Germany, France, the Low countries Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands as well as Austria.

- Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain as well as Malta and Cyprus.

- Eastern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria (the latter being the countries which joined in 2007).

In the following analysis, these groups will be used. Variations within the groups are possible, and will be pointed out. Since the different countries in a group vary in

population size, some countries dominate the groups: Germany and France dominate West-Central Europe; Spain, Italy dominates Southern Europe; Poland, and Romania dominates Eastern Europe.

First, an overview of youth unemployment in the EU is provided. This is to underline the usefulness of grouping countries and to describe differences in the social situation of young people in the EU, which relates to participation. Table 1 lists the relevant data according to country groups. The data show clearly that the problems of youth unemployment are most pressing in the Southern European countries of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, which are most severely affected by the financial crisis (and economic crisis). In the new Eastern EU-member states the level is higher than in other groups. The figures also show that those countries with high youth unemployment in 2011 had the greatest increase in unemployment since 2008, a finding that suggests structurally critical patterns of development. In contrast, the West-Central European countries (according to this grouping) are affected by this problem to a lesser extent. In Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, unemployment rates are below 10%. There are also considerable variations within the country groups. For example, in the West-Central European group, unemployment in France with 22.8% is more than twice as high as in Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. Unemployment in Denmark is clearly below the average rate in its group. In Cyprus and Malta, being less representative EU-countries in Southern Europe, unemployment rates are clearly lower than in other Southern European countries. However, the larger and more populous countries reflect the differences between the five groups, which are expressed in the mean values. When relating youth unemployment rates of the 27 EU-member states to the participation values shown in the following section, the following can be observed: The higher the youth unemployment, the lower the participation. Hence, not only does youth unemployment significantly affect the lives of young people and their integration into society, it also affects participation.

Table 1: Youth unemployment rates 2011

|  | Unemployment 2011 | Difference 2011-2008 |
|---|---|---|
| **Northern Europe** | **19.5** | **4.3** |
| Denmark | 12.3 | 5.1 |
| Finland | 19.9 | 4.1 |
| Sweden | 23.1 | 4.0 |
| **Western Europe** | **20.1** | **6.5** |
| Ireland | 26.9 | 16.1 |
| United Kingdom | 19.6 | 5.7 |
| **West-Central Europe** | **14.5** | **1.1** |
| Austria | 8.2 | 1.4 |
| Belgium | 18.3 | 1.7 |

| | Unemployment 2011 | Difference 2011-2008 |
|---|---|---|
| Germany | 9.1 | -1.6 |
| France | 22.8 | 4.2 |
| Luxembourg | 13.3 | -3.3 |
| Netherlands | 7.1 | 0.6 |
| **Southern Europe** | **35.3** | **14.3** |
| Cyprus | 19.6 | 10.8 |
| Greece | 38.5 | 17.2 |
| Spain | 45.7 | 23.2 |
| Italy | 27.8 | 7.3 |
| Malta | 12.3 | 0.6 |
| Portugal | 26.8 | 8.2 |
| **Eastern Europe** | **24.0** | **7.4** |
| Bulgaria | 27.3 | 13.1 |
| Czech Republic | 16.7 | 6.8 |
| Estonia | 20.4 | 12.2 |
| Hungary | 24.8 | 5.3 |
| Lithuania | 32.6 | 20.9 |
| Latvia | 29.7 | 19.0 |
| Poland | 23.6 | 6.0 |
| Romania | 22.8 | 4.0 |
| Slovenia | 18.4 | 8.1 |
| Slovakia | 33.3 | 13.9 |

Groups weighted according to "Youth on the Move" population weight
Source: Federal Office of Statistics/Eurostat, press release no. 293 dated 11.8.2011
Youth unemployment rate, based on persons in private households (15 to 24-year-olds)

## 3. Activities in Associations and Informal Groups

First, participation of young people in various organizations is shown. The question posed in the survey was: "Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?" In this context, civil societal organizations and politically oriented ones are being differentiated. The former include (according to the survey question of the study "Youth on the Move" to which the figures refer) "sports clubs, youth clubs, leisure clubs or any kind of youth organizations" and "cultural organizations". The most important (as generally the case in participation research pertaining to clubs and associations) were sports clubs: Approximately one-third of interviewees in the EU said that they had been active in the past year. Politically-oriented organizations include: "local organisations aiming at improving the local community or

environment", "other non-governmental organisations", "organisations promoting human rights or global development", "political organisations or parties" and "organisations in the domain of global climate change/global warming".

Table 2 shows that activity in civil societal organizations is about twice as high as in political ones.

Table 2: Activity in organizations (in %)

|  | Northern EU | Western EU | West-Central EU | Southern EU | Eastern EU | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity in civil societal organizations | 50 | 49 | 57 | 41 | 32 | 46 |
| Activity in political organizations | 26 | 27 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 21 |
| Voluntary activity in organizations | 21 | 30 | 29 | 18 | 20 | 24 |

Source: Youth on the Move 2011 (15 to 30-year olds)

46% of respondents were active in at least one of the above-mentioned civil societal organizations last year. This overall mean value was exceeded by the countries of Northern Europe (50%), Western Europe (the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland) with 49% and, above all, West-Central Europe with 57%. Less activity was reported by the youths in Southern Europe (41%) and especially the Eastern European countries (32%), i.e., in the nations with transformation societies after the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. The same ranking also applies to the most frequently indicated sports clubs. While there were some variations within the groups of European nations, the values did not differ much from the mean value. The highest activity rate was recorded in the Netherlands (68%), the second highest in Ireland and Belgium (61%). It is only in the case of Eastern Europe that the values of some countries differed more widely from the relatively low mean value, thus coming closer to the values of the Western European countries, such as Estonia and Slovenia with 47% and 48% respectively. In this group, Poland (one of the most populous countries in the group) had the lowest rate with 26%. Social participation was overall still the lowest in the countries of the East EU-expansion.

A different ranking, without any wide variations, was observed when surveying activity in political organizations (about one-fifth of respondents were active in at least one of the above-mentioned organizations last year). Eastern European countries have a slightly lower activity rate than Southern European countries, which have about the same rate as West-Central European countries. Higher values were determined in Northern EU-member states, the UK and Ireland (the highest value being 34%). Political activity in France, with only 16%, is the lowest among Western countries.

Another question in the study "Youth on the Move" dealt with voluntary participation in civil society; in Germany this is referred to as "honorary involvement". This implies acceptance of a higher degree of responsibility in an organization. The question regarding this was phrased as follows: "Have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities in the past year?". The question with respect to this sort

of involvement in the last year (from the date of survey) was asked without specifying the activity. Incidentally, this question is closely related to the question regarding activities in organizations—both in terms of definition (voluntary involvement "in organizations" is queried) as well as empirically. A total of 24% of youths in the EU were active in the said period. Variations among the groups of EU-countries are not as great as in the case of activity in civil societal organizations: greater voluntary involvement in the Western and West-Central European countries, lesser involvement at a similar level in the Southern European, Eastern European (not the least, as in the case of activity in organizations) and Northern European countries. The lower involvement in Northern European countries is due to the low activity level in Sweden (13%); however, in Denmark, the value is 36%. The greatest involvement was found in the Netherlands (40%), and both Slovenia (36%) and Latvia (30%) show values above average.

## 4. Political Participation

The study "Youth on the Move" of 2011 didn't include any questions on political participation, i.e., activities which take place sporadically and don't necessarily require membership in organizations, and which aim at political intervention. Therefore, the study "Young Europeans" of 2007, which includes a few types of political participation as per the above definition for all EU-member states, is referred to. Scientific studies, which focus more on political participation, such as the DJI-youth surveys or ALLBUS-studies, cover many more types of political activities as forms of participation. They include participation (by signing one's name) in petitions ("signed a petition"), participation in public demonstrations ("took part in a public demonstration") and participation (by voicing one's opinion) in an online-discussion or online-forum ("presented your view in an online discussion / forum"). The question was phrased as follows: "There are different ways of being involved in political life in order to ensure that your voice is heard by the policymakers. Have you done any of the following in the last year?" These three forms have slightly different characteristics: participation in petitions is less time-consuming or information-intensive, participation in demonstrations represents a greater involvement and often has a social element, and participation in online discussions incorporates politically oriented use of new media.

Table 3: Political participation (in %)

|  | Northern EU | Western EU | West-Central EU | Southern EU | Eastern EU | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| signed a petition | 53 | 48 | 28 | 21 | 21 | 28 |
| took part in public demonstration | 13 | 9 | 24 | 33 | 9 | 20 |
| presentation in online forum | 30 | 21 | 26 | 19 | 26 | 24 |
| political participation (at least one of the three forms mentioned) | 64 | 53 | 53 | 50 | 41 | 50 |

Source: Young Europeans 2007 (15 to 30-year olds)

Table 3 shows the percentages for the listed political participations as well as an overall indicator ("political participation"), which includes at least one of these activities (in the year prior to the survey). This indicator for political participation shows that half of all young Europeans participated in political activities. The value of the group of Northern EU-countries is above the overall mean value; whilst that of the Eastern EU-member states is below. When examining the three individual forms, further interesting differences can be observed. The percentage of signing a petition is relatively high among the Northern and Western countries, and lower among the other groups. Contrary to this, participation in public demonstrations is the highest in the West-Central European group and Southern Europe. France and Spain in the South dominate in particular. In nearly all of the 10 countries of the Eastern European group, this form plays a less important role. In case of the "modern" form of participation, online discussion, overall there are no wide variations. The Northern European countries are the most active in this form as well, while the group of Eastern European countries is more active or equally active as the other country groups.

## 5. Political Interest and Attitudes Towards the Current Situation in Europe

In addition, a few subjective factors influencing youth participation will be discussed. Participation research regards the first factor, political interest, as a central subjective motivation factor for political and civil societal involvement. In this context the data of the European Social Survey, a scientific data collection programme that has been conducting EU-wide surveys on social science-related topics since 2002 (ESS 2010), is referred to. The survey of 2008/2009, which is being studied here, uses the same country groups (with the exception of a few countries, which did not participate in the survey, e.g., Italy in the group of Southern European countries). It also enables a comparison of youths (15 to 30-year olds) with older people.

Table 4: ESS4: Political interest in the EU (in %)

| | Northern EU | Western EU | West-Central EU | Southern EU | Eastern EU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **political interest (15 to 30-year olds)** | | | | | |
| very/rather interested | 50 | 47 | 43 | 24 | 26 |
| little/not at all interested | 50 | 53 | 57 | 76 | 74 |
| **political interest (older than 30-year old)** | | | | | |
| very/rather interested | 62 | 59 | 62 | 29 | 44 |
| little/not at all interested | 38 | 41 | 38 | 71 | 56 |

Source: European Social Survey, Rd. 4 2008/2009

The data (see Table 4) show that political interest in the Northern and Western European countries is relatively high, while it is clearly lower in the Southern and

Eastern European countries. Among the individual countries of the groups there are only few wide variations; only in the group of the Eastern European countries can some bigger deviations be observed. Political interest in Greece is clearly below the average value in this group of countries. A comparison with over 30-year olds shows that among these age groups political interest is overall greater, a common result of participation research (in this context variations with increasing age should be considered, because political interest decreases in older people). The country groups show similar structures. However, it was found that older people in Central European countries are more interested in politics than young people, with the value being the same as for Northern European countries. Over 30-year olds in Eastern European countries are more interested in politics on the average than the same age group in Southern European countries (as opposed to youths), even though the values are still below the first three country groups.

An assessment of the economic crisis of the last few years based on a survey conducted in 2011 is briefly discussed in the following. However, for lack of data a separate evaluation of 15 to 30-year olds, which would be of interest, is not possible to date. Presumably, the results for the mentioned age group would be similar to the ones shown here. The data of Table 5 were extracted from the Standard-Eurobarometer of Fall 2011 (Euro barometer 76, 2011).

Table 5: Economic expectations in the crisis 2011 (in %)

| | Northern EU | Western EU | West-Central EU | Southern EU | Eastern EU | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| current situation of national economy - rather or very bad | 30 | 84 | 50 | 93 | 79 | 71 |
| future of EU - fairly or very pessimistic | 40 | 55 | 49 | 44 | 37 | 46 |

Source: Euro barometer 76 - 2011 (age 15 years and over)

The table shows an overall pessimistic assessment of the situation of the national economy at the end of 2011, particularly in the Southern European countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy and especially Greece with practically no positive outlook at all). In contrast, the Northern European countries assess the situation much less pessimistically, and in the Central European countries, the views are rather balanced. The following drastic variations were observed: In France the level of scepticism is above the European average, as compared to only 20% in Germany. In the UK and Ireland the values are very high, and in the countries of the EU-expansion the national economic situation is assessed rather pessimistically as well, with few variations (in Estonia and Poland a little less than in most other countries in this group).

The question with respect to the future of Europe was answered a bit less pessimistically overall; positive and negative views are more or less balanced (with negative views generally increasing since the beginning of 2011). Here the scepticism is a bit greater, particularly among the Western European countries (especially in the UK

which is not part of the Euro-zone and generally less optimistic about mainland Europe), but also in the Central European countries (especially France and Austria with values clearly exceeding 50%). Of special interest is that in the Eastern European countries, the assessment is overall less pessimistic; however, there are great differences: very low values in Romania, Bulgaria and Poland, rather high ones in Hungary and in the Czech Republic (with values slightly above the mean value in the less populous Baltic countries). Generally, more positive expectations of future developments in Europe prevail among the newly joined countries of the last East EU-expansion.

## 6. Outlook

What can help focus the attention of youths on the EU, and, as a result, possibly motivate them to participate actively in EU matters? A few ideas are covered in Gaiser et al. 2008. It was found that interest in politics in general and a better education are crucial factors for a positive attitude towards the European Union. In this context, it also became apparent that different dimensions of attitudes towards the EU, which vary widely, must be differentiated; for example, the relevance of Europe to one's own life (regarded by youths as important) or an assessment of European institutions (is attributed less importance). In summary, it can be said that European ideas hardly stand a chance of developing positively without a democratic foundation, and that nationalistic orientations continue to be problematic for Europe. However, unconditional euphoria towards Europe and the environment this would enable, cannot be assumed. New communication media and the possibilities of geographic mobility indeed create many opportunities for cooperation in Europe (keyword "Easy-Jet Europe"). Still, the coordination and joint setting of objectives for active participation remain difficult to achieve and are limited in their effectiveness even for Europe-wide objectives (Rucht 2011). Generally, optimistic prospects for a Europe to be improved democratically especially for youths shall be promoted. This is the basic intention of Habermas (2012), whose reflections constitute an attempt to focus youths on the future of Europe in the context of a "transnational democracy".

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# Youths and New Ways of Exercising Citizenship

*Anne Muxel*

Citizenship implies a set of rights and obligations towards the social and political community to which one belongs. It is demonstrated through a system of values and moral qualities and expressed through actions and specific behaviours that constitute the principles and modes through which democracy functions. It defines the relationship between individuals but also between themselves and society. Finally, it involves issues of political representation and power sharing. While the principles of democratic citizenship exist in a relatively abstract state, its workings and exercise have evolved over time, going through significant changes with each renewal across generations. Each new generation that enters politics is faced with an array of issues that are changing and that require renegotiation. The political expression of citizenship changes with the evolution of the political system itself.

The political transformations that France experienced over three decades have affected the relationship between individuals and the institutions that govern them and the conditions of participation in democratic life. These have profoundly changed the political landscape in which the youths today learn about democracy. They enter politics in a very different environment compared to their parents at the same age.[1] Indeed, new political divisions have arisen in comparison to the traditional articulation of Left and Right, calling into question how one interprets developments to understand politics on the ground. Electoral exercises involve reconstituted alliances and lines of battle. In an environment of weakening social, institutional, and partisan allegiances, political behaviour has been individualized. Voting turnouts have become more volatile, most notably with more choosing to abstain from exercising their vote. With growing political intractability, the means and expressions of protest have been strengthened. The mechanisms of political representation remain, but with increasing importance given to public opinion and the capacity to protest in support of one's opinion. Finally, the media has dramatically changed how power is exercised and the perceptions of the citizenry.

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[1]  Anne Muxel, *Avoir 20 ans en politique. Les enfants du désenchantement*, Paris, Seuil, 2010.

Young people exercise their citizenship in a relatively active and involved manner, combining pragmatism and idealism, protest and civic responsibility, much like what is happening in other Western democracies.

## What place do youths have in such a system?

Youths have recurring concerns. They are affected by and respond to various factors, such as education, employment, culture, health, sports and even politics. This is a positive thing. We will not discuss here how these factors exert their influence. Youths only have a place in the minds of a few or in political speeches talking about the youths of the future, proposing a vision of society, and therefore political hope. Because they frequently upset or embarrass, and because they are sometimes deemed as threatening, youths are frequently neglected in politics. Because they represent not only society's present state but even more so its future, the topic of youths often force a discourse of truth that is difficult to bear. Therefore, this has led to the evasion and avoidance of the topic and encouraged the view of the youth issue as a symptom to be prevented or treated, splitting it up into smaller parts for action to be taken. Few public policies involve a comprehensive look at youths in general. Youths are all too easily viewed through the excesses and risks that they may present not just to themselves but also to the rest of society. They are observed through a prism that paints them as negative and threatening. There are reasons for this. Youths come across as a mirror that enlarges many of the dysfunctions that characterise France today (long-term unemployment, precarious integration, declining purchasing power, limited autonomy, a faltering education system, etc.) However, we forget that we can also look at youths from different perspectives. Youths are rarely mentioned for positive reasons. We consider youths more for the symptoms and dysfunctions with which they are associated with rather than their qualities and the future potential that they embody. Ultimately, this situation leads to anxiety, discomfort and insecurity, preventing not only dialogue across generations but also thought as to what society can do to provide for its youths. Three-quarters (73%) of the French population believe that their children will do less well than themselves.[2]

Generational change is never a straightforward matter. It usually occurs in the presence of competition and rivalry. The younger ones are always subject to a general suspicion that they are not up to par with their predecessors. Historically, they are more quick to rebel, causing ruptures in the history of ideas and political changes. Revolutions have oftentimes been driven by youths. There are many cases of young people shaking up and challenging the order established by their forebears. However, there have also been occasions where the young have remained a step behind, powerless and disenfranchised. At various times, youths serve as social, cultural and symbolic markers of the

[2]  Baromètre de Confiance Politique du CEVIPOF 2009.

state of society.[3] Youths have to be integrated into the system of reciprocal obligations governing the socialization of individuals, in particular political socialization. Society must give youths a place and a role, and must allow them autonomy, thereby creating citizens and responsible nationals. At various times, these obligations are more or less fulfilled. The relative hopelessness that characterises the current social discourse about youths, including the view of them as a "sacrificed generation", has existed at other times in our history. A contract of trust across generations existed in the Romantic period, the mid-nineteenth century, and the interwar period in the twentieth century. One is reminded of the famous statement of Paul Nizan: "I was twenty; let no one say this was the best time of my life". It is crippling to be disillusioned at the place of one's father. The lack of perspective is presented as inevitable. Paul Nizan continues: "What was our world like? It had an air of chaos about it, like at the beginning of the universe when the Greeks played havoc with the clouds of creation. Yet we thought we could see the beginning of the end, the true end, and not that which is the beginning of a beginning."[4]

Today, if conflict remains a decisive factor in the socialization process of the younger generation, then there is still stiff competition from anomie and obstruction, making any prospect of transfer and handing over more problematic. This situation is all the more critical due to the blurring of reference roles. Since the sixties, when the culture of youth was omnipresent, and when norms, codes and cultural tastes were imposed on an entire society obsessed with youth, there has not been sufficient recognition of young people as autonomous individuals. The entry of youths into adulthood has been progressively delayed. They are not provided with the necessary means for their emancipation. Youths remain confined to a world of representations and practices, which comply with the expectations of youths in society. More importantly, there exists a lack of confidence, which is particularly significant in France. Compared to what is happening in other European countries, the image that the society has of youths is not any better or worse. However, there is a stigma of inferiority compared to other segments of the population that is more marked. French society on the whole appears more reluctant to give young people the means to occupy high positions in the social hierarchy or in the system of power. It is more cautious in recognising their actual status in endorsing their independence in professional and economic matters.[5] The conditions for a young person to enter political office appear to be much more limited in France compared to other countries. Multiple mandates and the inertia of institutions and sup-

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[3]  Ludivine Bantigny et Ivan Jablonka (dir), *Jeunesse oblige. Histoire des jeunes en France*, Paris, PUF, 2009.

[4]  Paul Nizan, *Aden Arabie*, Paris Editions Rieder, 1931, p.11.

[5]  On this topic, we can refer to the work by Pierre Cahuc, Stephane Carcillo, Olivier Galland et André Zylberberg, *Comment la France divise sa jeunesse. La machine à trier*, Eyrolles, Fondation ManpowerGrouppour l'emploi, 2011.

porters that encourage generational renewal compromise the participation of youth in the exercise of power and democratic responsibility.

Pessimism is rife in all population groups and also in all age categories in France. While many European citizens share a gloomy vision of their economic future, the French are the most worried: 77% believe that the global economic situation is bleak (versus an average of 67% in the EU), 84% feel that the national economy is doing badly (versus an average of 70% in the EU).[6] For ten years, a feeling of insecurity has gradually taken over all strata of society, reaching even the most advantaged and educated young people. The discrepancy between the promises of schooling and the reality of the workplace is a source of widespread malaise shared socially and generationally. The solidarity of opinion expressed in the youth protests against the CPE (*Contrat de Premier Embauche*, literally 'First Employment Contract') in March 2006 was emblematic of this fact. At the time, almost two-thirds of the French opposed the reform.

The horizon seems blocked. There exists poor social mobility, fear of retrenchments, and a process of exclusion. Youths, to varying degrees, suffer from an inability to develop a sense of ownership in the France of tomorrow. The issues of unemployment, education, but also integration should be a priority in policies oriented towards the youth. However, we must also address this crisis of confidence at the level of representations, discourses, and symbols. It is a matter of urgency to create and establish a discourse on youth, which weaves not only social ties but also the connection between generations, particularly by bringing together common interests that different generations may share rather than by continuing to oppose them.

## What is the connection to politics?

The pessimism and distrust of the French in social and economic matters are connected with the political system, especially with their political representatives. A clear majority of the French (52%) today do not trust the Left or the Right to govern the country.[7] Political defiance sets a framework of socialization that is not without effect on the attitudes and political behaviour of the younger generation. This can lead to a paucity of relative emotional and symbolic investment in the political arena. This can also lead to a growing propensity for protests, with the potential of radicalisation. In both cases, the dialogue with the democratic institutions and their representatives is impaired by a lack of mutual recognition and trust, which can lead to contradictory behaviour and paradoxical attitudes at best, and blockages and crippling break-ups at worst. For example, while young people would rather wait for their employability and economic integration to improve, and though they desire more, they are reluctant and most of the time opposed to any reform that relates to the education system and any attempts at linking

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[6]  Eurobaromètre Standard, N°74, automne 2011.

[7]  Baromètre de Confiance Politique du CEVIPOF, Vague 3, octobre 2011.

education and employment, whether from left-wing or right-wing governments. The extent of student mobilisation for the past twenty years reflects the anxiety of youths yearning for their future.[8] They signal an expression of politicisation that finds its outlet and power more in refusal than in adherence.

Our democracies have become more reflexive and the relationship that citizens have with the political system is now more individualized than at any time in the recent past. Party affiliations, like social allegiances, have weakened. The grand narratives have vanished and no longer provide a readable map for self-identification and affiliation. The logic of political experimentation has taken precedence over the logic of identification and affiliation. The younger generation has undergone a new type of political learning, reconciling intransigence on matters of principle with a preoccupation with pragmatism in political action, seeking values while demanding efficiency.

The young are a presence and demonstrate significant political responsiveness. However, this ability to respond and relative involvement are shorn of political organisations and institutions and lean towards traditional forms of individualised and sporadic action, in which effectiveness and immediate opportunities are the primary objectives. Youth have a great capacity to intervene on issues pertaining to local and international problems. Their protests are part of the trend of globalization, reconciling the interests of the near and the far. The context of the nation is no longer the only construct of an expression of their politicisation. In the 1960s and 1970s, political commitment was supposed to embrace an ideal. The militants at the time fought to bring about a better society, a new world. Nothing like that is happening today. The youths refuse to commit to pre-established dogmas. The militancy and the temporality of commitment have changed them. The current model assumes a constant questioning, a critical vigilance and the denial of the legitimacy imposed by the hierarchy.

However, the relationship between youths and politics is not unequivocal. Social fractures that affect the youth translate into significant political schisms. Educated youth and non-educated youth do not have the same relationship with politics. The former votes more for the Left and challenges more. The latter is more withdrawn from all forms of political participation; when voting, they may allot a significant proportion of votes to the Right, especially to the Far Right. In 2007, 22% of young non-graduates aged between 18 and 30 voted for Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of the presidential elections. Students only comprised 3% of those who made the same choice. Nonetheless, both groups share a common destiny strongly affected by a sense of growing insecurity about their lives and their future.

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[8]  Olivier Galland, *Les jeunes ont-ils raison d'avoir peur?*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2009.

**How does one exercise citizenship?**

Political participation can be expressed in different ways, through voting, abstention and protest. It is from the combined use of representative democracy and participatory democracy that citizens are heard. Abstention from voting has found a new place as an expression of protest. Analyses of voting behaviour reveal an increase in those who vote intermittently or who alternate between voting and abstention.[9] This type of voting behaviour differs across generations. Systematic voting is seen more in the older generation, while intermittent voting, mainly due to significantly greater use of abstentions, dominates in the younger generation. The civic norms associated with voting have weakened significantly. Recognition of the priority and political efficiency in the electoral act are more pronounced the older an individual is. During the 2007 elections, which included two rounds of presidential and two rounds of legislative elections, 64% of those aged 65 years or above voted in all four polls while the percentage was only 30% for those in the 18-30 years age group.[10] The voter today is primarily an intermittent voter and an intermittent "abstentionist".

The younger generation is less sensitive to the obligation of a citizen to vote and more responsive to the challenge of an election or the "personalisation" of electoral contests. In a sense, their citizenship is less prescriptive. They need a strong and perceived challenge to spur them to vote. The spectre of political action is not established in the same way at the two ends of the age spectrum. Although the majority of youth do not undermine the foundations of representative democracy based on organised electoral turnout, an increasing number of them favour and experiment with new forms of action. 32% of those between 18 and 24 years of age versus 17% of those 65 years and older consider other means of action apart from voting, such as demonstrations, strikes or boycotts, to be more effective.[11] Also, younger people are more tempted to eschew the conventional Left-Right paradigm and give some legitimacy to alternative political forces. Four in ten young people say that they are neither Left nor Right. During elections, alternative parties on the Far Left or the Far Right, but also forces such as environmental or centrist parties, attract the youth. In 2007, in the first round of the presidential elections, four young first-time voters in ten voted for candidates other than those from the two major parties of government, namely the Socialist Party (PS) and the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP).

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[9]  Refer to the collective work *Comment les électeurs font-ils leur choix? Le Panel Electoral Français*, Bruno Cautrés et Anne Muxel (dir), Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2009 or to the chapter of Pierre Bréchon «Comprendre l'évolution de la participation électorale: de puissants effets de générations», in Anne Muxel (dir), *La politique au fil de l'âge*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2011.

[10]  INSEE, Enquête participation électorale 2007.

[11]  Baromètre Politique Français 2006-2007, CEVIPOF.

Recognition of the legitimacy of political protest has become more prevalent in the population. Today, one in two French is willing to take to the streets to defend their interests, and two out of three of them are young.[12] However, among the young, this new democratic imperative has translated into real activism. One out of two has already participated in a protest. Far from being indifferent or focused on only specific issues that concern them, they are affected by the many problems that influence how society is run and organised. Racism, support for immigrants and those without identity papers, protests against the National Front, opposition to the participation of France in the war in Iraq, are all opportunities for protests and young people have often taken the initiative to take action. If the legacy of a democratic culture is proven, young people, by showing greater autonomy from their civic obligations, in fact redefine the contours of democratic citizenship. In keeping with the logic of action taking place mainly outside the bounds of traditional mediation involving political parties and trade unions and focusing on more specific forms of engagement, attached to the advocacy of concrete humanitarian or categorical causes, often through urgent coordination or mobilisation, political experimentation dominates and induces new ways for the exercise of citizenship.

"Indignant movements" reflect the transformations and limits of this new logic. Challenging how representative democracy currently operates, they reflect the crisis of political representation and citizen distrust. Beyond that, they recall the growing claim from civil society to have a stronger voice in our advanced democratic societies. By putting at the centre of the political scene not just trade unions, political parties and organisations, but also micro-networks of activists, members of communities, or ordinary citizens, such movements involve our entire political model. It is no longer the traditional players that appear but a heterogeneous group which speaks for a multitude of social and political demands. This is a new type of mobilisation, which can lead to political innovation and new forms of mediation, to reinforce and reinvigorate the democratic contract between the rulers and the ruled. However, if the distrust expressed in the current structures of political mediation leads to a rejection of such movements, the generalisation of these movements can also open the doors to the rise of populism and its authoritarian avatars. What constraint does this transformation in the exercise of democracy imply for mediating structures and workings of representation, or for democracy itself? We are at the heart of new democratic challenges that young generations are directly confronted with.

The framework of political and civic participation has also changed because of new communication tools and the amount and type of information that is available to citizens. Television, with its omnipresence in everyday life, is by far the leading source of information and representations shaping the political world and its field of activity

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12   Baromètre de Confiance Politique, CEVIPOF, Vague 3, 2011.

which influence the choices and behaviours of citizens of all ages. As an instrument of knowledge delivery and exchange, the Internet is also a media tool that leads to new practices of citizenship. It promotes collective mobilization in real time, maintains a culture of derision and a critical disposition, and, through a new demand for transparency, imposes other principles of exchange and communication between the rulers and the ruled. Younger generations are experimenting on the front lines of action in these and other new areas.[13] These new parameters lead to changing demands, just like the youths' expectations with regard to the political class. The supremacy of images and immediacy establishes an obligation for transparency and authenticity that strengthens the need for democracy. It shapes new types of representations and discourses and changes the faces of both sides in the dialogue between citizens and their political representatives.

If young people are critical and distrustful of politicians, political parties and party politics, they also demand political participation. Pragmatism, efficiency and empowerment are the hallmarks of a more experimental form of politics than before, because it requires constant renegotiation and readjustments. While distrust, intermittent voting and protests are also observed in the older generation, the changing forms of politicisation do not have the same scope among the younger generation. It is the process of political socialisation and the shaping of habits and behaviours that will guide their long-term political trajectories, their choices, as well as how they exercise their citizenship. It is in the climate of the politics of disenchantment that they take their first political steps. It is also in a social and economic context riven with endemic crisis that they prepare for their future.

In looking at restoring the political space for youths, and also locating this space in the overall social, emotional and symbolic connections that can be created across generations, three priorities can be drawn to guide public policies.

The first is to try to think of the generations together rather than separately. Policies already implemented and many "scholarly" discourses are only too likely to exacerbate the reasons for opposing them. Intergenerational ties and solidarity do exist in the private sphere and they must be relayed to the public sphere. We must allow different generations to focus on what binds them rather than what divides them. This requires not only focused initiatives but also a change in the discourse that often stigmatises the younger generation.

The second involves urgently meeting the need of youths for both integration and autonomy. Concrete measures can be adopted but also symbolic moves, through reference points, to give young people a sense that they are useful to society.

[13]  Monique Dagnaud, *Génération Y*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2011.

The third involves the development of a vision of the future, not only for youths but also for society as a whole. Politics do not speak enough of the future. However, we must give meaning to all the changes and transformations that are shaping the future of the younger generation.

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# Rioting in the Cities?
# Challenges of Socio-economic Change for Young People in England Today

*Martha Wörsching*

> Youth has always been under the microscope and of central concern to adults and the state. A range of fears and anxieties has consistently shaped the 'youth question' and influenced 'what is to be done about young people'. (France 2007: 1)

> The youths emptying sporting goods stores across the land, unlike previous generations of British rebels, have no manifesto. As a result, there are no demands that authorities in Britain can easily meet in order to pacify them. Yet, even as apolitical as they are, the looters pose a very serious threat to the British government. (Vallance 2011)

> In the words of Martin Luther King, riots are the voice of the powerless. (Reicher and Stott 2011)

> It was the best night of the year, it finally felt like all the people coming together, united to do something, even if that something was ultimately destructive. [Rioter, 17] (North London Citizens 2012: 25)

## INTRODUCTION

When the riots erupted on 6 August 2011 in London and quickly spread to other large cities in England, they immediately dominated not only the national news; the sudden outburst of public disorder and extreme violence also made headlines internationally: *The New York Times* carried a long article with the title 'Cameron's Broken Windows'[1]

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[1]  The title is an ironic reference to the 'broken society' concept which the then leader of the Conservative Party had highlighted in the run-up to the 2010 election; in this speech, Cameron had championed his idea of a 'Big Society'—and less 'big government'—as a way out of problems like youth crime (cf. Conservative Party Website 2010)

(Sennett and Sassen 2011), while the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine* wrote of an "Uprising of the Losers" who were turning the streets of the capital "into a war zone" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine* 2011); this was echoed in the *Daily Telegraph*'s images of "missiles and torched cars littering an urban war zone" (Riddell 2011). National and international television news showed shocking scenes of raging fires, mayhem and mindless destruction, and metaphors of war were used liberally. Commentators of every political persuasion went into overdrive to interpret the shocking events in their own predictable ways, with members of the government and local politicians blaming a 'feral underclass' (*The Guardian* 2011c) and 'feral youth' (*The Guardian* 2011b). Six days after the outbreak of the disorder, a *Daily Mail* online article by Max Hastings led with the title "Years of liberal dogma have spawned a generation of amoral, uneducated, welfare-dependent, brutalised youngsters" (Hastings 2011) in which the author called on the government to "introduce incentives for decency and impose penalties for bestiality", asserting that "(m)y dogs are better behaved and subscribe to a higher code of values than the young rioters of Tottenham, Hackney, Clapham and Birmingham" (ibid.).

The political establishment was recalled from their summer vacation at home and abroad. The prime minister, David Cameron, came back to London on the third day of the riots, to recall parliament. Unsurprisingly, he summarily condemned the perpetrators, threatening immediate and harsh punishment:

> This is criminality pure and simple, and it has to be confronted and defeated. … I have this very clear message to those people who are responsible for this wrongdoing and criminality: You will feel the full force of the law. And if you are old enough to commit such crimes, you are old enough to face the punishment (*The Guardian* 2011a).

Since these events in August 2011, despite the government's reluctance to set up an official inquiry, discussions have been on-going about the unprecedented scale of the disorder as well as the wider causes, and there have been a number of investigations, set up with the awareness that such riots could break out again. In an atmosphere of intense politicisation of the serious issues, it is not easy to come up with a dispassionate analysis that goes beyond facile interpretations of the events. Also, the wealth of primary material available in electronic form may, on the one hand, be seen as a great advantage for researchers, compared to the conditions of studying riots in England in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the immensity of the electronic material found on the internet as a result of documentation by official as well as social media, may also be seen as a huge challenge for researchers. For the purpose of this paper here, I will aim to summarise briefly the events which took place in England during the few days of the riots, to discuss then the findings of a number of major investigations and interpretations published since then, in order to consider the results in the context of the main socio-economic and political factors which affect the lives of young people in England

today, an age group demonised often by the older members of society as 'feral youth', 'feckless underclass' and 'brutalised youngsters'.

## The Riots in August 2011

It is generally agreed that the riots were sparked off by the death of a young man of mixed parentage—he had a white mother and a black father—who was shot by the police during an attempted arrest in Tottenham, North London, on 4 August 2011. Two days later, on Saturday afternoon, there was a peaceful protest outside the local police station by the family and friends of Mark Duggan, the man shot by the police under suspicious circumstances[2]. The group of protesters had asked to speak to a senior police officer but their request was ignored. Tensions among the increasing crowd grew slowly, and by about 9 pm, Duggan's family left the scene as bottles were thrown and two police cars went up in flames. Running battles with police began in Tottenham High Road, shops were set on fire and uncontrolled looting began. On the following Sunday, violence spread to other parts of London, with looting in Enfield and Brixton and minor disturbances at Oxford Circus, Hackney and Waltham Forest. On the third night of the disorder, there was violence in 22 out of 32 London boroughs, with the worst scenes in Croydon where there was widespread arson and a 28-year-old man was shot dead. This night also saw rioting in other towns and cities of England, such as in Birmingham, West Bromwich, Nottingham and Liverpool. It seems that the rapid spread of the disturbances was helped by the Blackberry messaging service used by the young, but also by real-time television reporting which brought more people into the areas where rioting was under way.

On Tuesday, the fourth night of unrest, with a huge police presence, London was comparatively quiet, but serious disturbances with widespread looting occurred in Manchester and Salford, and in Birmingham three men—Haroon Jahan, 21, Sazad Ali, 30, and Abdul Musavir, 31—were tragically killed while trying to protect local shops.

## Investigating the disturbances

In the days and weeks following the riots, the government came under pressure to launch a full public inquiry, but there was some reluctance to do so, with Cameron claiming that 'criminality pure and simple' needed no more than to be confronted and punished (The *Guardian* 2011a). After pressure from the opposition and also the Liberal Democrats, the junior partner in the governing coalition, on 16 August, the

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[2]  An article on 28 March 2012 in *The Guardian* reported that the Independent Police Complaints Commission "has unearthed such sensitive material over police decision-making that it is unable to reveal it, even to the coroner", and so "the inquest into the shooting of Mark Duggan has been further delayed, to January 2013" (Scott 2012).

Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, confirmed in a speech that the Cabinet Office was planning to set up an independent Communities and Victims Panel to produce a report. However, as Clegg stressed: "It won't be a public inquiry, it won't be established under the Inquiries Act, but it will serve as a way in which victims and communities can have their voice heard" (Clegg 2011).

In an atmosphere where the government's main aim was to stamp out disorder, identifying and charging rioters, threatening their eviction from council housing and loss of benefits while at the same time fast-tracking sentencing by criminal courts[3], an independent project *Reading the Riots* was set up in September 2011 to study the events systematically. It was planned as a social research inquiry conducted by the *Guardian* newspaper in collaboration with the London School of Economics, led by Prof Tim Newburn, head of the university's social policy department, with the financial support of two charities, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Open Society Foundations.

> *Reading the Riots* is modelled on an acclaimed survey conducted in the aftermath of the Detroit riots in 1967. The findings of that study, the result of a ground-breaking collaboration between the Detroit Free Press newspaper and Michigan's Institute for Social Research, challenged prevailing assumptions about the cause of the unrest. (Lewis 2011)

The first part of *Reading the Riots—Investigating England's summer of disorder* was published after three months, and a separate, still on-going study is being conducted by academics at Manchester University, aiming to study a database of more than 2.5 million riot-related tweets, involving also "interviews with the police, court officials and judges and a series of community-based debates about the riots" (Lewis and Newburn 2011).

The large research team carrying out the first phase of the study, published in December 2011, used confidential interviews with 270 people directly involved in the riots in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, Liverpool and Nottingham. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews with rioters were mainly held in the community, with a small minority in prison; about 80% of interviewees were male and 20% female. "Almost 30% were juveniles (aged 10-17) and a further 49% were aged 18-25. In terms

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[3]  Sentencing was seen by some commentators as punitively disproportionate. An article in *Socialist Review* in September 2011 comments: "Sentences so far have included four years in prison for 'inciting' rioting on Facebook and six months for stealing bottled water priced at £3.50." (Richardson 2011) See also: *The Economist*, 2011.

of self-identified ethnicity, 26% of the sample were white, 47% black, 5% Asian, and 17% 'mixed/other'" (*The Guardian*/LSE 2011: 3).[4]

The factors underlying the riots were summarised in this study in the following way:

- anger and frustration about everyday treatment by the police;

- resentment about the disproportionate and targeted use of stop-and-search by the police;

- rival gangs effectively suspended hostilities during riots;

- rioters came from a cross-section of local communities;

- just under half of interviewees were students; of the non-students, 59% were unemployed;

- half of the interviewed were black, but generally rioters did not consider these 'race riots';

- looting was often attributed to opportunism;

- 59% of rioters came from the most deprived 20% of areas in the UK;

- the increase in university tuition fees, closure of youth services and scrapping of the education maintenance allowance (EMA) and anger at Mark Duggan's shooting were claimed as "motivating grievances" by rioters;

- 81% of the interviewed thought that riots would happen again, with 35% saying that they would get involved again (*The Guardian*/LSE 2011: 4-5).

To consider the factors leading to the unrest from a local grassroots perspective, the *Citizens' Inquiry into the Tottenham Riots* is of interest; published in February 2012, it was initiated by 'London Citizens', a coalition of civil society groups with roots in the area where the riots broke out, led by "nine community members, including a head teacher, a youth worker, a college student and a diverse group of faith leaders" (Whitehead, 2012). The work involved interviewing over 700 people, from rioters to local traders who had lost their businesses. With a Foreword by David Lammy, the black

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[4]  Interestingly, a *Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th-9th August 2011*, published by the Ministry of Justice in February 2012, identified similar demographic characteristics as the *Guardian*/LSE study for the 2710 rioters brought before the courts by February 2012: 89% were male and 11% female; 27% were juveniles and 26% were 18-12 years old, with only 6% being over 40; 41% identified themselves as white, 39% as black, 12% as mixed, 6% as Asian and 2% as Chinese or Other (Ministry of Justice 2012).

MP for Tottenham[5], the Citizens' Inquiry suggests that there were four main causes of the riots:

- a breakdown in the relationship between the police and the community,

- endemic youth unemployment,

- a decline in the condition and reputation of Tottenham and

- a deep-seated sense of powerlessness among the community (North London Citizens 2012: 12-13).

This Inquiry ends by recommending a "collaborative regeneration and planning strategy that unlocks the energy of the community and attracts investment into Tottenham" (ibid.: 22) and to "[t]rain 100 people from diverse institutions in Tottenham to act as powerful, effective leaders to take forward the Citizens' Work Plan" (ibid.: 26). Addressing specifically the local citizens, council, MP and also businesses in more detail, the Inquiry recommends finally that: "We should build momentum and partnership around a vision of Tottenham as a Centre of Excellence for youth leadership, with 10 hubs of high quality youth provision and training across Tottenham" (ibid.: 27). Considering that youth services in Tottenham had recently experienced financial cut of 75%, it will be interesting to see whether such recommendations are taken seriously.

The report produced by the *Riots Communities and Victims Panel*, whose establishment the Deputy Prime Minister had promised on 16 August 2011, underlining that it was "not a public inquiry" (Clegg 2011), was further qualified by him when the panel membership was announced: "it will be a purely grassroots exercise to listen to the experiences of those in communities affected by the riots and disorder including residents, shopkeepers, parents and young people" (Deputy Prime Minister 2011). With an interim report published in November 2011, the final report of this panel—a full 148 pages—was published on 28 March 2012. The Panel of four people nominated by the three main political parties had worked with 80 different local authorities throughout England. Their findings are very wide-ranging and general and can be summarised as identifying four underlying causes: rampant materialism, lack of economic opportunities, a breakdown in community ties and a loss of trust in the police and the public sector (Boffey 2012), but the suspicion that this was no more than a very lengthy exercise in allowing people from the affected areas to reflect on their experiences—serving "as a way in which victims and the communities can have their voice heard" (Clegg 2011)—is strong; whether this can have any effect on the underlying causes is a different question.

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[5]  Lammy himself had produced a book on the riots within months of them taking place, in which he tried to make sense of the events, considering the historical and socio-economic changes since his own up-bringing in this part of London; untypically, he had escaped from the community by gaining a scholarship in a select choir school, going on to study law at London University and Harvard.

In the report's 8-page "Executive Summary", followed by 12 pages of 63 different "Recommendations", there are very general statements under the headings of "Children and parents", "Building personal resilience", "Hopes and Dreams", "Riots and the brands", "Police and the public" and "Community engagement, involvement and cohesion" (Riots Communities and Victims Panel 2012b: 1-8). To demonstrate that this report reflects more about the communities' desire to come to terms with their own experiences during the disturbances than confronting the factors underlying the outbreak of public disorder and violence, let me quote two paragraphs from the section "Building personal resilience":

> We met people who had been convicted of all kinds of riot-related offences. We also met many people who had suffered considerable disadvantage, who made a choice not to get involved in the riots. In asking what it was that made young people make the right choice in the heat of the moment, the Panel heard of the importance of character. A number of attributes together form character, including self-discipline, application, the ability to defer gratification and resilience in recovering from setbacks. Young people who develop character will be best placed to make the most of their lives.
>
> Evidence also tells us that employers want to see character in potential recruits. Work programme providers are forced to focus on it in helping young adults find work. In our National Survey, over half of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) who responded do not rate provision in their areas to build character in young people as 'good' or 'very good'. We feel that the riots demonstrated the need to focus on how we instil character where it is lacking. (ibid.: 2)

It becomes clear that individual "character-building" and "building personal resilience" in the face of a hostile, competitive world in which children and young people grow up is at the top of the recommendations here. If this reflects the deep powerlessness which the communities feel, then it cannot surprise the reader that the "Conclusions" of the Executive Summary end up in wildly unrealistic, impractical demands:

- Every child should be able to read and write to an age-appropriate standard by the time they leave primary and then secondary school. If they cannot, the school should face a financial penalty equivalent to the cost of funding remedial support to take the child to the appropriate standard.

- No child should be transferred into an unsatisfactory Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision until standards are improved (unless there is a risk of immediate danger).

- Every child should have the skills and character attributes to prepare them for work, when they leave education.

- No offender should be placed back into a community on leaving prison without wrap-around support, otherwise the community is put at risk.

- No young person should be left on the work programme without sufficient support to realistically hope to find work.

- Government and local public services should together fund a 'Youth Job Promise' scheme to get young people a job, where they have been unemployed for one year or more. (ibid.: 8)

One may sympathise with all these demands, yet with the 'radical' cuts in the public sector in line with the government's austerity policies, there is little hope that the interventions suggested here can be implemented. It seems that this report reflects the trauma experienced by the communities and their fears of a repeat of the disturbances, but the objective conditions of socio-economic inequality in which the urban young are growing up are ignored; instead, the call is for interventions for individuals and families to adapt and become 'personally resilient' to the demands of a consumer society which is increasingly running out of jobs. On the day when the report was officially published, the chair of the Panel, Darra Singh, is quoted as saying: "We must give everyone a stake in society. There are people 'bumping along the bottom', unable to change their lives. We urge party leaders to consider the importance of all of our recommendations. Should disturbances happen again, victims and communities will ask our leaders why we failed to respond effectively in 2012" (Bawden 2012). One cannot disagree with such feelings, but the report in all its wordiness does not help explain why so many young people in the affected areas, especially young men, feel that they *have no stake in society.*

## Growing up in Britain today

Most of the commentators on the riots agree that the neighbourhood in North London where the disturbances started was one of growing deprivation with a history of social and race conflicts. London, one of the richest cities in the world, has extreme poverty often right next to conspicuous riches and luxury[6]. Since the 1980s, with deindustrialisation and economic restructuring, Britain as a whole—more than most other European countries—has become an increasingly unequal, polarised society, with inequality widening under the New Labour Government and becoming even more severe after the 2008 recession[7], and the effects of the present coalition government's austerity policies are expected to hurt particularly poor families with children.

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[6] "Inner London is deeply divided: It has by far the highest proportion of low income but also a high proportion of people on a high income." (The Poverty Site 2010)

[7] "The gini coefficient measure of overall income inequality in the United Kingdom is now higher than at any previous time in the last thirty years." (The Poverty Site 2010)

The experiences of young people growing up in an unequal society mean that a large proportion of them are raised in families where poverty is already inherited; despite major attempts by past governments to combat child poverty, the UK now has one of the worst records in the industrialised world (Brewer et al. 2011), and according to research published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, with the present government's measures to reduce the national debt, the number of children living in poverty is expected to increase even further by 2013/14 (Browne 2012).

An international comparative study of the effects of income inequality paints a bleak picture for the UK, as it highlights how young women and men respond to their low social status in terms of educational performance, teenage pregnancy, violence, imprisonment, social mobility, etc. (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). The authors underline that the great inequality in the children's home background and wide disparities in their social and cultural capital make a mockery of the 'league tables' for schools which are supposed to measure attainment objectively, while in fact reflecting the social and geographical background of the student intake.

Other research shows that the polarisation in material and educational inequality seriously affects the well-being of children and young people. A UNICEF study from 2011 considers the role of inequality and materialism on children's well-being in the UK, Spain and Sweden, and it highlights the following:

> Spain and Sweden provided a good comparison with the UK in cultural background and policy and legislative framework, as well as having different combinations and levels of inequality and well-being. … The message from all children … was … unanimous: their well-being centres on time with a happy family …. Yet despite this commonality, the ethnographies demonstrated that family life in the three countries was strikingly different. In UK homes, parents were obviously struggling to give children the time they so clearly wanted …. Uncertainty about the rules and roles operating within the family further exacerbated the sense of struggle. We found less participation in outdoor, sporting and creative activities among older children and children from lower-income families (UNICEF 2011).

In relation to consumer goods, children were aware of the symbolic use of brands to display superior status or avoid bullying, yet British parents seemed to be more under pressure to "continually buy new things for their children and themselves", often buying their children "status brands, believing that they were protecting them from the kind of bullying they had experienced themselves in their own childhoods" (ibid.). The research also found that older children in secondary school became increasingly aware of inequality or social and cultural difference; "material goods and brands began to play an important part in how children identified with their peers, and how they categorised their peers into social groups. In the UK and to a lesser extent in Sweden, high status brands tended to be more important to children from less affluent backgrounds, perhaps as a means of masking financial and social insecurities and bolstering

self-esteem" (ibid.). Clearly, adolescents become increasingly aware of the divisive forces in a society where, all too early, the education system aims to categorise them into 'insiders' and 'outsiders', 'winners' and 'losers', thus sorting 'the wheat from the chaff', instead of developing the capabilities of the many (Sennett 2008).

Inequality is certainly compounded by an education system that is all too rigidly geared towards university education. Without the long tradition of Germany's extensive system of craft training and despite attempts of previous governments to combat youth unemployment effectively (Leaman 2010), a high proportion of young people in Britain—many boys from disadvantaged families and especially black boys—are turned into educational under-achievers, becoming disaffected and all too frequently excluded from school, with disastrous consequences for their employability. The very high number of young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training—the so-called NEETs—has been causing headaches to consecutive governments[8]. According to a recent article in *The Guardian*, unpublished government figures show that more than half of young black men available for work in Britain—about twice as many as young whites—are now unemployed, showing that the recession is hitting young black people disproportionately hard (Ball et al. 2012), while young people as a group lose out to older people in the recession, as firms prefer to hold on to their older employees instead of taking on young people without experience (Vasagar 2012).

Thus, the transition to adulthood in Britain is particularly precarious for increasing numbers of young people, as they are faced by a deregulated labour market where specialist academic and scientific qualifications as well as a certain level of 'social capital' are required to gain more secure, full-time jobs. With youth unemployment more than twice as high as overall unemployment in the UK, past governments' attempts at 'activation policies' have not brought the expected success. This is true e.g. of Blair's New Deal for Young People aimed to "reach the disadvantaged young whose inclusion/exclusion from employment was seen as a critical factor in the determination of social mobility and social cohesion" (Leaman 2010: 66), and the financial crisis has further increased youth unemployment. In a climate of global economic insecurities, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the urban young to make the transition into economic activities which can offer the means to independent living for themselves, let alone as the basis to provide for a family. Labour economists also have drawn attention to the effect of 'permanent scarring' on the future lives and careers of individual young people as a result of early joblessness, with negative effects on wage levels and further spells of unemployment (Leaman 2010). Thus, the experience of early unemployment and job insecurity in a rich consumer society can hardly make for social cohesion and

[8]  According to the Department of Educations' statistics, in August 2011, at the time of the riots, there were an estimated 978,00 young people aged 16-20 who were NEETs in England, representing 16% of the age group; 186,000 of these were aged 16-18. (Department of Education 2011)

civic pride among children and young adults, the main group involved in the August riots in 2011.

This becomes also evident in a specific study into the situation of young people and the riots which similarly highlights the general effects of inequality, unemployment and marginalisation, while drawing attention to a number of government policies which might have contributed to the feelings of alienation and frustration among the young: the failure of governments over the last 30 years to provide sufficient social housing, the lack of social spaces (as a result of dispersal orders and the increasing privatisation of public spaces), the banking crisis and austerity measures undermining social cohesion as well as the specific cutbacks of government support for the young, for instance the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (for students from disadvantaged families intended to encourage them to stay in education past the age of 16) and other cuts to youth services (Smith 2011).

In the context of the social, political and economic developments over the last few decades which have affected young people's situation in society, what seems to distinguish the young in Britain from most other young Europeans is their complete lack of interest in and distrust of formal politics (Wörsching 2010)—often interpreted as the result of social and political disempowerment. Indeed, the lack of engagement with formal politics is particularly pronounced among the more disadvantaged young women and men who feel powerless to improve their own lives, let alone have a way to affect public life for the better. That this feeling of individual powerlessness erupts into collective disorder experienced in a euphoric way should perhaps not be all that surprising: the frenzy to trash, loot and burn the luxury high-street stores symbolising 'the system' of consumer capitalism has at the same time seriously scarred the disadvantaged communities further.

## Conclusion

Looking again at videos of the riots which are still all over the internet, one sees once more the crowd's excitement and euphoria while one is hit by the 'mindless destruction', burning and looting of huge high-street stores, and one must commiserate with the feelings of despair of the small shop-keepers who lost all their businesses in the few nights of riots. A report was written just days after the riots by the *Guardian* reporter John Harris who visited West Bromwich, six miles from the centre of Birmingham. The youth unemployment rate here is 33%. The report paints a picture of a depressed high-street where groups of black, white and Asian youths hang around while shop-windows are being boarded up and shop-keepers talk about police not having intervened before their shops were emptied by looters. Harris writes about one of the owners who lost all his investment of £300,000 the night before:

He showed me smears of blood on the walls, and the forlorn remains of his stock: two or three crates full of plugboards and software CDs. "And they didn't look hungry or deprived. They were wearing designer clothes." He sighed. "Opportunist thugs. The UK's gone soft. Too many do-gooders." (Harris 2011).

The communities themselves will doubtless continue trying to make sense of the events while waiting for compensation. Whether the looters were "apolitical" (Vallance 2011) or collectively opposing capital's property laws[9]—the fact is that these events have shown that among young people in Britain there are "scores of people with nothing to lose and a tangle of grudges against authority" (Harris 2011). It would certainly be naïve to expect that the diverse groups of young individuals involved in the disorder shared a defined 'political' objective or ideology. One must hope against the odds that one of the results of the events in August 2011 will be a renewed and serious effort of civil society, academics as well as policy makers to listen to the young and—together with them—consider ways in which this generation can gain a stake in society and learn to take responsibility for a democratic future.

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[9]  When asked why people looted, one young kid in Bromwich replied: "Free shit," … "And fucking the system." (Harris 2011)

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Rioting in the Cities?  Challenges of Socio-economic Change for  Young People in England Today

133

# Youths in Poland and their Attitudes towards Politics, Democracy, and Political Involvement

*Bernadette Jonda*

When news about the violent crackdown of the student democracy movement in the Chinese capital spread around the world in early June 1989, young people gathered on a square near the Dominican Church in the Polish city of Wrocław. The dozens, sometimes hundreds, who built tents and held out for days were mainly students. Some came, others left, only to rejoin the protestors later. They were all united in their desire to express their solidarity with the Chinese students of Tiananmen Square, the square of heavenly peace, remembering well their own struggle for peace in the streets. Only four weeks prior to the events in China, they had been allowed to freely elect their first representatives for the Polish Parliament.[1] Hence, they knew that people often had to pay a high price for freedom.

When the Arab people rose up to free themselves from oppression in 2011, the square near the Dominican Church in Wrocław had no space left for another tent camp for young people to show their solidarity: On the wide square, where people had mourned the dead of China in 1989, the Hotel Mercure Panorama had been built 10 years ago and the Galeria Dominikańska, a modern temple for consumption that occupies 30,000 square metres and three levels of 100 shops, cafes and restaurants. According to the company's advertisement, these facilities "guarantee a successful and outstanding shopping experience". Hence, was there no space left that would have allowed for demonstrations of solidarity with the people who fought for freedom?

It seems that the problem is not limited public space. Those who did not restrict themselves to celebrate their own victory over communism back in 1989, but demonstrated their solidarity with the Chinese people, are disappointed. They voice their rancour over the lack of commitment of Polish youngsters for the current freedom fighters in the world.

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[1]  The first partly free elections in Poland took place on 4 June 1989. The union Solidarność, operating under the name "Civil Committee Solidarność", won all seats that were up for election (35%) in the Sejm, the Polish parliament, and 99 of 100 seats in the reconstituted Senate. For the first time since 1945 a non-communist head of government was elected (Tadeusz Mazowiecki).

> "In the past, pupils used to ask me questions all the time. They wanted to talk with me. They wanted to know my opinion. That belongs to the past. I believe after September 11, 2001, there was increased interest for political events and political processes among the young as there was great concern and sympathy. Now, I have to spend a lot of energy to get my students to discuss any political topic in the lesson" – says a 55 year old teacher from G.

Obviously, not every teacher would agree with this point of view. But Polish researchers have observed widespread political apathy among the young. A comparative study on "Changes of Norms and Values among German and Polish Youths" being carried out since 2011 at the Institute for Sociology at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg in cooperation with the Willy Brandt Centre for German and European Studies at the University Wrocław, affirms this point of view: Polish youths seem either hardly involved in the political process, or not at all. In many interviews politics is found to be viewed as either negative ("*politics is a dirty business*"[2]) or as insignificant. According to one youth:

> "Politics don't interest me. I don't know what the elites do or what they want. And we don't have any influence."

In the interviews conducted, many young people claimed that current politics did not meet their expectations, and there were no options for participation in party politics for young people. Although the newly founded party "Ruch Palikota" ["Palikot's Movement"] does capture the attention of Polish youth, their relation to the party is ambiguous. On the one hand, many young people find it "cool" that this party advocates for the legalisation of soft drugs *("Those who voted for them were youth people, because of Marihuana"*). On the other hand, many young people believe that "Palikot's Movement" is a farce[3].

Polish young people perceive the events on the political scene as a lack of loyalty and as politicians perpetually swapping opinions. The attitude of Donald Tusk, the Polish head of government, towards ACTA is cited as an example by Polish youth ("*initially he was in favour, now he backs down*"). The view that politicians are only concerned with the advancement of their own careers, instead of working for the interests of the general public, is very common. Nonetheless, numerous young people hold the opinion that it is important to vote, because "*other countries observe us*" and "*it is a duty*". Even though they believe that they do not have a real choice, they claim they vote for the lesser evil. At the same time, according to other studies, almost three-quarters of

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[2] If not indicated otherwise, all quotes are taken from the interviews of 2011.

[3] In the October 2011 elections for the Sejm, this party won 10 per cent of the votes and is currently the third strongest political party in Poland. Palikot's Movement is deemed resolutely liberal, populist, and downright anticlerical. The party demands among other things liberal abortion laws, guarantee of rights for homosexuals including approval of same-sex marriage, and the legalisation of soft drugs.

all young people that were polled (73%) thought that they had a real choice (Herrmann 2011, p. 50). The same study finds that as many respondents (73%) disagree that "*politicians are people who want to achieve something for the public good*". Two-thirds of respondents (66%) disagree with the statement "*The political parties represent the interests and opinions of the citizens*" (ibid. p. 51).

Former studies have proven that young Poles view political parties very critically and that they have little interest in politics: In a representative study of 2001 examining the youths' view on areas of life according to their importance, politics ranked last (Koseła, Jonda 2005).

These insights may be surprising, given that the Poles are cherished in Europe as a people whose political activities in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the far-reaching revolutions across Europe that resulted in the fall of the Berlin wall.

But at the beginning of the 21st century, young Poles distanced themselves from strikes and similar forms of political action. In a 2001 study (Koseła, Jonda 2005), Polish youths were asked whether they would *participate in a legal or authorised demonstration*. While half of those polled responded that they might participate, 38% responded they would "*never, under any circumstances, participate*". Such numbers become meaningful especially when they are compared internationally.[4] A parallel study that was conducted in Germany in 2001[5] allows for a comparison of Polish and German poll results. Since the point of departure for the reflection on political processes and attitudes differs in East Germany and West Germany, the respective data is presented separately. While West Germany was under the influence of the USA, Great Britain, and France after the Second World War, East Germany – similar to Poland – found itself in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. In consequence, West Germany developed democratic structures fairly early, while East Germany and Poland were only able to start this process after 1989.

According to the study of 2001, only 4.4% of male, and 2.5% of female Polish youngsters had participated in a demonstration. In this regard, the difference between Polish and German youngsters is very distinct. 17.2% of male and 16% of female youths from West Germany, and 34% of male and 26% of female youths from East Germany had participated in a legal or authorised demonstration.

Even more, Polish youths had not participated as much as German youths in rather tame forms of political engagement such as *participation in a collection of signatures* or *writing letters of protest* (see tables 1 and 2).

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[4]  While half of those polled in Poland responded they might participate in a legal or authorised demonstration and 38% responded they would *"never, under any circumstances, participate"*, in West Germany of those polled 59% and 15%, and in East Germany 52% and 13% responded respectively.

[5]  In the simultaneously conducted representative survey, 1242 Polish and 1059 German youngsters were polled (see Kosela, Jonda 2005).

Table 1: Participation in a collection of signatures (in %)

|  | Poland | | East Germany | | West Germany | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Participated | 13.9 | 13.3 | 54.3 | 69.9 | 39.1 | 50.4 |
| Might participate | 47.8 | 51.0 | 34.3 | 26.8 | 49.0 | 39.5 |
| Would never, under any circumstances, participate | 30.3 | 27.1 | 7.6 | 1.6 | 6.6 | 4.8 |
| Don't know | 7.9 | 7.9 | 3.8 | 1.6 | 5.3 | 5.3 |

Source: Results of own research in 2001.

Table 2: Letters of protest (In %)

|  | Poland | | East Germany | | West Germany | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Participated | 4.3 | 4.1 | 22.1 | 17.9 | 14.6 | 21.0 |
| Might participate | 47.5 | 52.5 | 45.2 | 67.5 | 60.3 | 57.0 |
| Would never, under any circumstances, participate | 41.2 | 35.0 | 23.1 | 7.3 | 15.8 | 14.9 |
| Don't know | 6.9 | 7.9 | 9.6 | 7.3 | 9.4 | 7.1 |

Source: Results of own research in 2001.

The willingness to rebel against or become active for a political goal seems to be less pronounced among Polish youngsters than among German youth. Does this mean that Polish youth are very satisfied with the current situation in their country? To provide a little context: One needs to be bear in mind that the current situation in Poland – as it did in the former German Democratic Republic and other socialist states – started to evolve over 20 years ago into a new political system. This process would not have been possible without the active resistance of the people against the old system. However, when asked in 2001 "*Is, in your opinion, our democratic system worth defending or not*", only 6 out of 10 young people responded in the affirmative. This is the exact result of the poll of young people in East Germany and 20 percentage points below that of West German young people (see table 3).

Table 3: Responses to the question "Is, in your opinion, our democratic system worth defending or not". (In %)

|  | Poland | | East Germany | | West Germany | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| Yes, it is | 63 | 58 | 60 | 63 | 83 | 81 |
| No, it is not | 20 | 18 | 23 | 19 | 3 | 5 |
| Don't know | 16 | 23 | 11 | 18 | 12 | 13 |

Source: Result of own research in 2001.

Only 41% of all young people polled in Poland in 2001 agreed with the statement "*democracy is superior to all other forms of governance*". In Germany, 67% agreed in the

West, and 48% in the East. The approval rating for the statement "*sometimes a non-democratic government can be more appropriate than a democratic government*" was similar in all three regions that were examined: 16% in Poland, 15% in West Germany, and 17% in East Germany.

Table 4: General attitudes towards democracy (In %)

|  | Poland | East Germany | West Germany |
|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy is superior to all other forms of governance | 41 | 48 | 67 |
| Sometimes a non-democratic government can be more appropriate than a democratic government | 16 | 17 | 15 |
| For people like me, it is basically insignificant whether the government is democratic or not | 34 | 14 | 7 |
| Don't know / No response | 9 | 21 | 10 |

Source: Results of own research in 2001.

A third of respondents from Poland believed that "*for people like me, it is basically insignificant whether the government is democratic or not*" – which is five times higher than the results for West Germans (see table 4). In conclusion, Polish youth had much less pro-democratic views than West German youth, who were both convinced that democracy was superior to other forms of governance and that democracy was worth defending. The difference of 20 percentage points between young people from Poland and East Germany on the one hand, and West Germans on the other, can be interpreted as "*the specific size of the impact of communism*" (Grabowska 2006, p. 65). Living in a relatively stable democracy seems to promote pro-democratic attitudes. However, the socialist history of now democratic Poland produces a general rejection of the communist past, while simultaneously producing lower levels of acceptance of democracy and suspicion towards political institutions as well as a "*multi-dimensional apathy*" (ibid, p. 73).

It is important to point out that the respondents of the 2001 survey could only choose one of three given options. In the 2009 CBOS survey on "*Opinions about the functioning of democracy in Poland*", there was no such limitation so that the respondents could respond to each of the statements separately. In this respect, a direct comparison of the data of 2001 and 2009 is difficult. Nonetheless, the examination of the results of 2009 provides valuable insights (see table 5), especially when the responses of the 18 to 24 year old pupils and university students are compared with the general public: Young Poles who pursue a good education tend to view democracy as superior to all other forms of governance more than the general public, and fewer young Poles have no opinion on that issue than the rest of the population. However, more recent studies prove that the percentage of young people who hold distinctively pro-democratic views is decreasing (Herrmann 2011, p. 43). At the same time, the percentage of those who respond that they have no opinion increases (up to 36%!) (Herrmann 2011, p. 43f.).

Table 5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement on democracy? (In %)

| | | N | Yes | No | Difficult to say |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democracy is superior to all other forms of governance | All respondents | 1088 | 68 | 14 | 18 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 160 | 70 | 17 | 13 |
| | Pupils/Students | 109 | 75 | 15 | 10 |
| Sometimes a non-democratic government can be more appropriate than a democratic government | All respondents | 1086 | 35 | 40 | 25 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 160 | 43 | 34 | 23 |
| | Pupils/Students | 109 | 47 | 33 | 19 |
| For people like me, it is basically insignificant whether the government is democratic or not | All respondents | 1088 | 33 | 53 | 14 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 160 | 30 | 58 | 12 |
| | Pupils/Students | 109 | 25 | 64 | 11 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the data of the CBOS, see project report "Opinie o funkc-jonowaniu demokracji w Polsce" ["Opinion on the functioning of democracy in Poland"] of February 2009 (BS/20/2009, p. 17-19)

Young people with a high level of education seem to be relatively satisfied with how democracy functions in Poland: Only a third is dissatisfied, whereas almost half of the total population is dissatisfied.

Table 6: Are you – in general – satisfied or are you not satisfied with how democracy functions in our country? (In %)

| | N | I am satisfied | I am not satisfied | Difficult to say |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All respondents | 1085 | 42 | 49 | 9 |
| Aged 18-24 | 160 | 56 | 33 | 11 |
| Pupils/Students | 109 | 60 | 33 | 7 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the data of the CBOS, see project report "Opinie o funkc-jonowaniu demokracji w Polsce" ["Opinion on the functioning of democracy in Poland"] of February 2009 (BS/20/2009, p. 20)

Even though the rate of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Poland is relatively high among the young respondents, most hold the opinion that they do not have any influence on the fate of their country (see table 7). At least, half of the pupils and students think that they have influence on the fate of their city or municipality.

Table 7: In your view, do people have influence on the fate of their country, city, and municipality? (In %)

| | | N | Yes | No | Difficult to say |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People like me have influence on the fate of their country | All respondents | 1089 | 25 | 72 | 3 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 160 | 33 | 63 | 3 |
| | Pupils/Students | 109 | 38 | 59 | 5 |
| People like me have influence on the fate of their city and municipality | All respondents | 1089 | 42 | 55 | 3 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 160 | 47 | 48 | 3 |
| | Pupils/Students | 109 | 51 | 44 | 5 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the data of the CBOS, see project report "Opinie o funkcjonowaniu demokracji w Polsce" ["Opinion on the performance of democracy in Poland"] of February 2009 (BS/20/2009, p. 13-14)

In this context, a comparison with the older study could be interesting. Even though the data sets are not perfectly comparable due to the different spot tests, there are remarkable tendencies. For example, in 2001 the vast majority of the polled youths aged 15 to 24 opinionated – without significant gender differences – that the government should assume more responsibility to provide social security for all citizens (see table 8). When asked to rate their opinion on a scale from 1 ("*more government responsibility for the social safety of citizens*") to 10 ("*more individual responsibility*"), only 14% of males and 16% of females tended to favour more personal responsibility. In East Germany 29% of both genders, and in West Germany 38% of males and 43% of females favoured more personal responsibility.

Table 8: Government responsibility for individual welfare (In %)

| | Poland | | East Germany | | West Germany | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| **1** More government responsibility for the social safety of citizens | 26.3 | 26.2 | 27.8 | 13.1 | 6.4 | 5.1 |
| **2** | 17.6 | 18.2 | 11.3 | 15.6 | 10.6 | 10.2 |
| **3** | 17.5 | 15.6 | 16.5 | 27.9 | 18.2 | 16.1 |
| **4** | 12.1 | 12.4 | 8.2 | 8.2 | 13.0 | 9.1 |
| **5** | 12.6 | 11.4 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 13.5 | 16.4 |
| **6** | 4.3 | 3.9 | 10.3 | 8.2 | 10.8 | 10.5 |
| **7** | 3.2 | 3.1 | 9.3 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 7.8 |
| **8** | 2.3 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 6.6 | 11.5 | 12.6 |
| **9** | 1.8 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 4.1 | 6.1 | 7.0 |
| **10** More individual responsibility | 2.2 | 2.4 | 4.1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 5.1 |

Source: Result of own research in 2001.

The reason for this kind of responses may again be traced to the communist legacy that still seems to be more prevalent in Poland than in East Germany. Arguably, the influence of this legacy may weaken over time. Nonetheless, future examinations of the ability for political participation will have to consider theories of developmental psychology and socialisation, as well as the regime change itself (Grabowska 2005, p. 132).

More recent studies – as the CBOS survey of January 2010 on the social involvement of Poles – indicate that assuming responsibility for the common good and the society is more pronounced in young people and especially in pupils and students than in the population as a whole. The same applies to the awareness of the individual ability to help those in need.

Table 9: Which of the given opinions is closer to your own opinion? (In %)

| | N | People like me are **not able to** help those in need or to resolve the problems in their community, village or city – even when they join forces with others | People like me are **able to** help those in need or to resolve the problems in their community, village or city when they join forces with others | Difficult to say |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All respondents | 1052 | 25 | 66 | 9 |
| Aged 18-24 | 143 | 24 | 72 | 4 |
| Pupils/Students | 101 | 14 | 84 | 3 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the data of the CBOS, see project report "Działalność społeczna Polaków" ["Civil society engagement of Poles"] of January 2010 (BS/10/2010, p. 17)

While a quarter of Poles share the opinion "*People like me are not able to help those in need or to resolve the problems in their community, village, or city – even when they join forces with others*", 84% of the pupils and students polled responded: "*People like me are able to help those in need or to resolve the problems in their commune, village or city when they join forces with others*" (see table 9).

This attitude corresponds with the degree of agreement with the statement: "*At the present time one has to be more sensitive and more willing to help other people*," which 68% of pupils and students share, as well as 64% of those aged 18-24. In this context, it is important to consider that religion remained an important factor in the lives of Polish youngsters in 2010. Charity and sensibility for the needs of others are innate elements of the Christian belief. However, the high unemployment rate in Poland and the resulting competition in the labour market make many Polish youngsters think that "*at the present time you have to mind your own affairs, rather than those of other people*" (31% of pupils, 28% of students, CBOS 2010b, p. 16). The 2001 study shows that the willingness to help other people was considered important. The difference in survey results between Polish youths and German youths was remarkable. While 68.4% of male and 79.7% of female Poles responded they enjoyed or enjoyed very much doing voluntary work in their pastime, 52.4% and 58.5% of German youngsters responded that they never do volunteer work in their pastime (see table 10).

Table 10: Responses to the question: "How much do you enjoy doing voluntary work in your pastime?" (In %)

| Doing voluntary work in your pastime | West Germany | | East Germany | | Poland | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| enjoy very much | 7.4 | 6.5 | 14.4 | 5.7 | 15.8 | 23.1 |
| enjoy | 13.9 | 17.2 | 11.5 | 17.1 | 52.6 | 56.6 |
| don't enjoy | 12.7 | 11.2 | 11.5 | 13.8 | 17.8 | 9.2 |
| don't enjoy at all | 13.6 | 10.9 | 8.7 | 4.9 | 4.3 | 2.2 |
| don't do voluntary work | 52.4 | 54.2 | 53.8 | 58.5 | 9.6 | 8.9 |

Source: Results of own research in 2001.

The CBOS survey of 2010 affirms the attitudes stated in 2001: 57% of the polled pupils and students responded in 2010 that they had "*worked at least once voluntarily and without pay for the benefit of their church, community, village, city, or people in need*". In 2009, 20% of pupils and students had done voluntary work (see table 11).

Table 11: Voluntary work (In %)

| | | N | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have you ever worked voluntarily and without pay for the benefit of your church, community, village, city, or people in need? | All respondents | 1052 | 54 | 46 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 143 | 50 | 50 |
| | Pupils/Students | 101 | 57 | 43 |
| Have you done voluntary work or have you worked without pay for the benefit of your community in the past year? | All respondents | 1052 | 20 | 80 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 143 | 24 | 76 |
| | Pupils/Students | 101 | 28 | 72 |
| Have you worked as a volunteer in the past year? | All respondents | 1052 | 6 | 94 |
| | Aged 18-24 | 143 | 15 | 85 |
| | Pupils/Students | 100 | 20 | 80 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of the data of the CBOS, see project report "Działalność społeczna Polaków" ["Civil society involvement of Poles"] of January 2010 (BS/10/2010, p. 19-21)

The willingness to do voluntary work seems to spread. The bi-annual CBOS surveys prove that especially pupils and students participate in voluntary work for the benefit of their community or people in need (see table 12).

Table 12: Individuals who do voluntary work (in %)

| | For the benefit of their own community or people in need | | | | | In civil society organisations | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 |
| All respondents | 19 | 24 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 23 | 20 | 28 |
| Aged 18-24 | 13 | 26 | 22 | 20 | 24 | 28 | 30 | 25 | 23 | 24 |
| Pupils/Students | 23 | 26 | 25 | 19 | 28 | 32 | 33 | 31 | 25 | 43 |

Source: Own compilation on the basis of CBOS data, see project report "Aktywność Polaków w organizacjach obywatelskich w latach 1998-2010" ["Activities of Poles in civil society organisation in the years 1998-2010"] of January 2010 (BS/16/2010, p. 12)

This information is particularly interesting given that Polish young people were less active in civil society groups in the past compared to youths in Germany. The 2001 study provided evidence for this inactivity. Very few Polish young people (0.3%) were members in political parties (3.0% in West Germany, 2.6% in East Germany). Only 1.3% were actively involved in ecological organisations (which is similar to West and East Germany: 1.4% and 0.9% respectively), and 3.2% were members in clubs for the arts and music (West Germany 9.3%, East German 7.6%). 2.3% of the respondents worked in charity organisations (2.8% in West Germany, 0.4% in East Germany). Most Polish young people said they were members in sports clubs and other leisure organisations (11.6%), which is still considerably lower than the membership rates of German young people (31% in West Germany, 27.8% in East Germany). 7.2% were members in youth clubs such as scouting, as compared to 8.4% in West Germany and 4.4% in East Germany.

The results of these surveys on political and societal participation do not merely represent values and convictions. They also reflect concrete actions that can be fundamentally different from attitudes. On the one hand, attitudes may not be followed up by actions (Grabowska 2006, p. 69). On the other hand, empirical research may not accurately reflect reality. In this regard, the events in Poland in 2010 offer a few remarkable examples: The nation seemed to be in a state of shock when 96 individuals, including the President and other government VIPs, lost their lives in the plane crash of 10 April 2010 near Smolensk. In that situation it was mainly young Poles, in many times scouts, who did voluntary work from arranging flowers and candles to caring for needy mourners.[6] In the weeks following the crash, a wave of floods hit parts of the country. It was again young people who helped stabilise barriers and participated in rescue missions for people and animals.

These examples for the involvement of young people are without a doubt taken from extraordinary and catastrophic circumstances. Nonetheless, the examples could help challenge the notion of the apathy of Polish youngsters. Equally interesting is the question of whether the form of expressions of sympathy may have changed over time. Expressions of solidarity posted on the internet may have replaced demonstrations in streets and squares. These new forms of networking used especially by young people were not considered in the cited survey which calls for the broadening of such studies.

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[6]  Currently, two years after the catastrophe of Smolensk, the youths are not interested in the issue anymore: The political exploitation of this tragedy by some politicians is strongly rejected by young people.

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# Youth, Society, Participation:
# A German Perspective on Structural Conditions for Political Participation

*Liane Pluto and Mike Seckinger*

## Background

One of the many characteristics of democracies is their desire to actively develop programmes that allow for adequate forms of political participation for their youth. Various groups are promoting this process: support comes from experts who deal with young people in their professional capacity; from people themselves; and finally, from the realm of politics. Indeed, in accordance with the respective times, new forms of political participation are constantly developed. These range, for example, from the establishment of youth associations as socially recognised forms of self-organisation to local youth parliaments or dialogue sessions with politicians but include also various expressions of public protest, such as house-squatting, flash mobs and others.

Society has a strong interest in these developments as youth behaviour and levels of youth participation are seen as indicators for the future progress of society at large. Participation rights of children and young people are legally enshrined in various documents including the UN Children's Convention and the German Civil Code. In terms of legal protection, considerable progress has been made over the last 25 years. The German Child and Youth Welfare Law (SGB VIII) encourages the extensive participation of children and young people in youth work programmes or in welfare offers regarding education. Other examples of the law being employed to encourage a politically active youth may be found in the local constitutions or in those of the different German federal states. In order to realise the participation of young people, local programmes and initiatives were launched both nationwide and at the state level promoting participation in various sectors of society and seeking to encourage adults to support young people in their quest for greater participation. The process of increasing debate within society, the facilitation of activities and the attempt to improve opportunities for participation is continuously evolving and developing. The developments and experiences of recent years provide a wealth of experience from which one can learn a great deal about the implementation of participation processes as well as derive knowledge

of structural requirements (see also Betz et al. 2010). There are, of course, areas that require more support and improvement. For example, the participation of youth in the management of schools or in the complaint management procedure that is in place in children and youth welfare institutions requires greater support and structural improvement before it can be taken for granted.

Following a discussion on the concept of participation, the following paper illustrates the specific institutional structures that foster participation by looking at three specific areas. First, the paper will highlight the necessity of formally safeguarding participation by looking at the example of the school. The second part focuses on structural opportunities for participation with specific reference to the example of youth work. The final part of the paper is devoted to the need to foster confidence in young people through the example of local participation.

## Conceptual Classification

To encourage participation is to create structures and opportunities that enable young people to participate in all matters and decisions that affect them in their living environment. Rather than excluding them from such decision-making processes, young people must be given the opportunity to contribute to or even bring about such decisions. This understanding of participation is not limited to the notion of politics in the narrow sense. Degrees of participation should thus not be measured exclusively through voting behaviour and levels of civic engagement (such as being a member of a citizens' initiative).

The definition of political participation—as the authors understand it—goes beyond the idea of an area of learning which prepares young people for their role as citizens. Instead, young people, with their interests, desires, perspectives, and needs, need to be taken seriously and must be granted an equal place within society as citizens. This also includes the necessity to perceive and acknowledge types of behaviour that are typically displayed by youth, including, for example, the acquisition of public space as an expression of youthful creative impulse and the desire to actively shape their environment. Such acquisition of public space may thus be interpreted in the sense of "As young people we do not want to use public spaces that have been pre-designed by adults; we wish to create our own public spaces instead".

Political participation is often understood to capture various forms of involvement. However, it is not easy to describe accurately which type of influence constitutes participation in a specific situation. After all, with a view to representative forms of political participation, young people only obtain full access to the rights and obligations of a democratic society once they reach 18 years of age. These include the right to participate in all national elections (in some federal states, however, teenagers may already participate in local elections from the age of 16 years). This fact explains the need to direct analytical focus also to other forms of participation.

In order to support the participation of young people, one has to take into account that young people are still learning. More specifically, it is important to acknowledge that young people do not always possess the necessary knowledge to enforce their interests effectively. However, this acknowledgement should not be misused as an excuse to declare participation by young people in certain situations premature. On the contrary, it calls on society to ensure young people encounter structures that support them in taking part in the process of shaping society. Their youthful inexperience is thus merely an argument that points towards the need to find appropriate methods and structures that facilitate participation.

The notion of participation goes beyond mere attendance—such as going to school or visiting a youth organisation or youth centre regularly. Nevertheless, the aspect of attendance highlights one major prerequisite for participation, namely the need to give young people access to these facilities.

The current debate often points out that the new media and Web 2.0 offer fundamentally new opportunities for participation. With the help of new media, information can reach its target audiences in a more focused manner and improve communication between young people. This, in turn may facilitate enhanced self-organisation as has been observed most recently in the context of the Occupy Movement. New media applications and their effectiveness have yet to be assessed systematically. What emerges is a need to investigate firstly, whether certain groups of young people are excluded from the advances of media technology—a phenomenon known as the digital divide—and secondly, how this in turn may affect their opportunities for participation. In addition, this field is changing rapidly. However, it would be inappropriate to assume that these new tools for communication can be automatically equated with improved opportunities for participation. While it is indisputable that these new tools offer many new opportunities, it will take a few years to reveal their full potential.

With the help of a model known as the participation circle (Pluto 2007: 53), one can describe both the necessary conditions that must be met before one can speak of participation processes and the requirements associated with participation. Using the example of youth participation in the planning of a new residential district, the benefits of the participation circle can be illustrated. For example, if you were to offer young people only two ready-made options to choose from and they were to vote for only one of them, this procedure would still not meet the requirements of participation. After all, the youth would have to cast a vote without information on the background or rationale behind the planning proposals while also being excluded from the consequences of their decision. In such a procedure, they would only have access to a specific element of the participation process, namely "decision-making". Instead, it would be necessary to engage young people in a dialogue throughout the entire process of re-designing the residential area; to encourage them to offer possible solutions to problems encountered; to include their proposals and contributions in the discussion; to include them in

the actual planning; to delegate decision-making powers to them; to include them in the implementation stage and to make them jointly responsible for the outcome of the process. It would thus not be surprising if young people, due to the limited scope of co-determination available to them (to simply vote for one of the suggested alternatives), did not show greater interest in residential planning and thus gave unfair support to the adult belief that young people do not have the necessary skills to participate in such decisions. To engage young people in discussions about, for example, the features of a new youth centre without organising joint planning and decision-making constitutes a further example of unsuccessful participation. The above highlights the persistent shortcomings of participatory processes. While young people are included in the planning process up to a certain point, for example in the format of a workshop, the final decision is taken elsewhere. It is therefore of little wonder that the young feel disenfranchised from the planning and decision-making around them.

## Formal Safeguarding

For all areas of life, there is a need to formally safeguard the participation rights on the part of young people, as well as the duty to encourage participation on the part of adults and institutions. The laws and rules adopted by schools, companies, and institutions of youth work provide this formal safeguarding. Safeguarding is necessary to ensure that participation cannot be misused as a reward or withdrawn as a sanction. However, institutional anchorage is not enough; it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for securing the participation of young people. The co-determination of young apprentices in the internal affairs of a company marks an example of youth participation that enjoys a long tradition and legal protection.

While legal obligations do exist, the example of school illustrates well that formal safeguarding is simply not sufficient to secure participation in an institution that is central for children and adolescents. In Germany, participation rights of the student council—a forum elected by the pupils of a school—are formally enshrined in the respective laws of each federal state. These laws define that students can exert influence on the organisation of the school usually through forms of representative democracy, for example, class representatives, student councils, and school conferences. This provides students with a formally secured framework for the enforcement of their rights as students and the improvement of their opportunities for participation. However, despite these comparatively favourable legal framework conditions, a flourishing of the active participation of pupils in the organisation of their respective schools has not substantiated. Several studies have shown that students are dissatisfied with their possibilities of influence. In a nationwide survey, only 15% of students questioned expressed the opinion that they are able to participate 'a lot' or 'very much' (Fatke and Schneider 2007: 67). In core areas of school such as the curriculum and the grading system, opportunities of influence are considered low. One reason for this low effectiveness of

existing opportunities for participation also lies in the limited range of opportunities for participation enshrined in the regulations. Another reason is the frequent failure of adults to offer adequate support to students. Young people are often unaware of their rights and opportunities to exercise influence while also lacking the skills to make use of existing forms of participation (see Edelstein and Fauser 2001). Undoubtedly, pupils are not trained for the responsibilities of the student council, although such training would improve both the participation of students as well as the quality of the participation processes and their results.

## Room for Experiences

It is impossible to prescribe neither democracy and democratic processes, nor participation in social issues or the willingness and desire to take responsibility for aspects relating to daily coexistence. Instead, it is necessary for children and young people to see their conceptions of participation, their ideas, and their forms of cultural production taken seriously and promoted by adults. Young people require opportunities that allow them to gain experiences both in their daily lives and in the political arena to further develop their ideas and to expand forms of participation. Without concrete experiences that show how personal commitment and effort can make a difference, only a small proportion of young people can be excited by the idea of participation processes.

Youth work aims to provide such spaces and opportunities for experimentation for and with young people. This applies to both the youth work done by associations as well as the services of youth clubs and youth centres. In Germany, youth work looks back at a century-long tradition of creating socially acceptable spaces where young people can try out their own things that may even challenge the adult world. Thus, they contribute to the progressive development of society. The more complex modern societies become and the more rules-based the everyday lives of young people become the more essential it is to prepare the infrastructure for such free spaces; that is to promote youth work and to provide adequate resources. These resources include full-time staff, financial support of activities, the right to use public spaces, political lobbying, and a tolerance towards typical youthful behaviour.

Studies show how important full-time staff is for the provision of opportunities for volunteering. "The positive effect of full-time employees in terms of activation of voluntary work, however, requires a self-conception of the organisation, which is not marked by a strong supply-orientation and programme-control" (Seckinger et al. 2009: 10), but is guided, instead, by the notion of acting in support of the implementation of ideas of young people. Professionalism, which is the promoting of participation in this sphere of activity, is visible precisely in options for action, knowledge of how the adult world works, as well as providing and supporting young people in realising their ideas. An important catalyst for the youth to self-organise and an important enabler to

ensure the transference of experience between the generations lies with well-trained and well-paid professionals for youth work.

The better and more tightly the foundation for youth work has been secured in the region, the more youth work can assume this role. Additionally, in Germany, there have been and still are a variety of programmes to promote youth work, in particular with the aim of promoting both opportunities and willingness for participation. These programmes have been and continue to be funded at the local, state and federal level. Nevertheless, in recent years, several regions of Germany experienced significant cuts in spending on youth work thus limiting such opportunities. According to available data, right-wing extremist groups who seek to gain recruits for their anti-democratic organisations through youth programmes are exploiting this situation.

The necessity for tolerance towards typical youth behaviour for the promotion of participation is evident from the conflicts experienced within associations in which both adults and young people are organised jointly. Such associations require young people to rigorously submit to the existing norms and leave little room for the realisation of their own ideas. As a result, those associations increasingly experience recruitment problems. On the contrary, associations in which young people are able to implement their own ideas and to critically engage with adults on questions of freedom and autonomy may foster democratic behaviour. Young people view these forms of engagement as positive because they experience themselves as active rather than passive participants.

## All Issues Offer Opportunities for Participation

Structural conditions that promote opportunity and places that encourage experimentation are central conditions for participation. Equally important are structures that permit young people to be involved in decisions that affect their living environment. Youth work has an important function here because it represents the interests of young people both in the community (for example, in local youth welfare committees or participation in local politics) and via their association structures, at the higher level. The creation of the youth welfare committee forms an important pillar as it unites representatives from politics and independent agencies that can take joint decisions that are binding for the administration. The committee also has the task of representing the interests of children and young people outside of the realm of youth work. In general, this is not a direct but rather a representative protection of interests. Municipalities, in particular, are faced with the question how the involvement of young people in local government decisions can be organised. While the arguments in favour are obvious, they are seldom realised in everyday life. Young people are only sporadically involved in planning processes and only for very specific topics such as the design of a schoolyard or a football field. At the same time, municipalities must acknowledge young people as key experts in these processes that can provide valuable suggestions

and are able to endorse decisions responsibly. Municipalities have also noted that they can achieve higher levels of satisfaction with their decisions and the quality of life in the community if they allow systematic involvement. Unfortunately, established methods to integrate young people in decision-making are often lacking in other areas of concern to young people. Although about half of the nearly 600 administrative districts of the youth welfare offices boast youth parliaments and youth forums, their tasks, structures and degrees of influence differ greatly. Often, these organisations appear less concerned with the goal of enabling co-decision-making in all subject areas of a municipality for young people, but rather serve as a showcase for local politics to declare themselves as participation-friendly. Admittedly though, it is not an easy task to develop structures that enable everyone—children, youth, adults and the elderly alike—to shape their own community. As has been described above, for youth parliaments to function effectively, continued support and guidance from qualified adults, financial resources and adequate preparation are important prerequisites.

Participation processes require a variety of forms of participation, as current examples of participation fail to reach the socially disadvantaged. In particular, representative forms of participation target youth who can easily communicate their needs and ambitions. However, that does not mean that all others lack the competence for this form of participation. However, they do need appropriate support to consider the experience worthwhile. Whether participation processes successfully move forward thus also depends on whether the opportunities for participation offered can be tied to the interests, skills and value systems of all young people. In particular, those municipalities which value citizen participation highly and understand it as a guiding principle of their actions have it easier to involve young people on issues that go beyond the football field. Where adults display faith in the interests and competences of the young the latter show greater levels of participation.

## Outlook

A central task of socialisation in liberal societies is to develop a personality that is characterised by individuality and autonomy. At the same time, society expects its members to view themselves as active shapers of the society and to act in the interest of the common good. In both dimensions, participation is an important facilitating element: for the individual as a mode of emancipation, and for society as a mode of integration. Participation is thus in a constant state of conflict. How much individualism, diversity and renewal does a society need to avoid stagnation and how much can it tolerate without breaking apart?

This is especially so for the youth as adolescence is a period of active contestation with the values and norms of a society. Young people will question existing norms and examine their continued value for society. The process of questioning is a typical characteristic of adolescence and part of generational renewal.

Whether a society wants this or not, this change will always take place and young people will find avenues to express their need to question the *status quo*. Whether this process occurs in an evolutionary or revolutionary manner depends on whether society acknowledges the need for debate or refuses to accept it. For the youth, experience will keenly shape their views. If young people do not believe that they can contribute, their self-centeredness will become even more pronounced.

If one takes these correlations seriously, then for society this means it must create opportunities for participation and expect at the same time that young people will exercise them. It also means that one cannot plan what exactly will be the result of the participation process. It requires a certain level of open-mindedness when it comes to results as well as being able to engage in something new.

These examples should illustrate that structural conditions are necessary so that the participation of young people can be supported and implemented. It should be clear that it is not sufficient to trust for these to unfold by themselves. At the same time, the adequacy of the structures needs to be assessed regularly, because all of these, often formal, structures can develop "side effects". The challenge of encouraging participation by young people is to provide maximum support without being limiting. This is the open-ended conclusion in the design of a generational contract.

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# Adolescents and Young Adults in Germany: Increasing Willingness to Perform and a Growing Sense of Social Responsibility

*Martina Gille*

## 1. The Juvenile Stage in Transition: Increased Skill Requirements and Tendencies of Youth Precaritisation

Youth is a stage of life that lies between childhood and adulthood. Youth as a period of life is shaped both historically and socially, and, since the beginning of the 20th century, has changed significantly. With industrialisation and the corresponding rise in professional qualifications, the stage comprising the acquisition of academic and professional qualifications by the young became largely understood as the juvenile stage. Initially, youth was a concept primarily employed in reference to young middle-class males while the life of girls and young women was understood through their roles as mothers and housewives (cf. Münchmeier 1998).

In post-industrial societies, there has been a further extension in the length of adolescence. In addition, the juvenile phase for girls and boys has developed into a separate stage of life in the sense of an "educational moratorium" with "[y]oung people […] experiencing a longer period of life characterised by limited obligations in the areas of work, family and civic public" (Zinnecker 1991, p. 16). Hence, through this alteration, the acquisition of academic and vocational qualifications is now considered equally important for both sexes and subsequent employment is an important goal for both groups. Nevertheless, gender-specific patterns do develop with respect to educational backgrounds and career paths. As a result, in comparison to young men, young women often find themselves in less well-paying jobs, part-time jobs and work places that offer limited career prospects. The reconciliation of family and work also continues to be an important issue for young women (see Gille 2008b).

The young generation of today is often marked with the label *Génération Précaire* (Dörre 2010). This refers to dramatic changes in the working society that have led to a profound alteration of the period where individuals are considered juveniles. These changes mainly refer to structural modifications of contemporary working conditions which see a shift away from normal employment contracts—characterised by a

life-long career, a steady wage and social security, and, especially for men, their unquestioned role as breadwinner. Instead, contemporary times have seen the increase in less-stable employment prospects characterised by the rise of fixed-term employment, part-time work and an expansion of the low-wage sector.

For young women and men, this not only results in increasing job flexibility both spatially and temporally, but also higher economic uncertainty, an increasing risk of poverty and low chances of committing to long-term lifestyle choices such as starting a family. Thus, post-Fordist working societies call the education moratorium of youth into question (Böhnisch, Lenz and Schröer 2009). As adulthood with its lifelong, secure and adequately paid professional employment ceases to exist, youth can no longer be seen as a transitional phase from childhood into adulthood.

How do adolescents and young adults in Germany respond to these changing societal conditions? What attitudes and lifestyles do young people develop? Do they feel ready to face these societal challenges or do they show signs of resignation? How have the dreams and ambitions of young people in Germany altered over the past two decades? This paper will address these questions by referring to the findings of several youth studies, such as the DJI-Survey 2009 AID:A ("Growing up in Germany: Daily Lives", www.dji.de/aida) as well as the DJI Youth Survey 1992-2003 (www.dji.de/jugendsurvey). This analysis will focus its attention on adolescents and young adults aged 16 to 29. Since the experience and nature of the juvenile phase are influenced very much by each young person's educational path, his or her gender and whether he or she lives in East or West Germany, the results presented here are differentiated according to these criteria.

## 2. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE? RECENT RESULTS BASED ON THE DJI SURVEY 2009 AID:A

An important developmental milestone during adolescence is the acquisition and internalisation of values. Values are the basis for the development of individual aspirations and help young people develop perspectives for their lives. They act as assessment criteria for their own actions and steer behaviour in particular directions (cf. Hurrelmann, 2007).

In the DJI Survey AID:A 2009, young people were asked to evaluate twelve values, which can be assigned to the value range of self-fulfilment, social behaviour, assumption of responsibility, duty, materialism and hedonism. It was hoped that the choice of values would address the core aspects of young people's lives and relate to the wider debate on changing societal norms and values (cf. Gille, 2008a). When the values assessed by the young are viewed according to their degree of importance, we see largely matching priorities between young women and men and the majority of the polled values receiving high scores (the averages all lie above the theoretical midpoint of 3.5 of the scale; see Figure 1).

The survey also found the value of "Helping other people" to be very important to all young people. Moreover, "being considerate of others" and "taking responsibility for others"—which together with the value of "helping other people" represent the range of values concerning social behaviour—find great support among young people. However, values concerning social behaviour appear to be influenced by gender. Girls and young women are more socially oriented. This finding suggests that gender-specific socialisation still takes place with girls and young women prescribed with the role of being helpful, supportive and responsible for others. The overall high importance assigned to values related to social behaviour contradicts the assumption of the young as selfish that is often voiced by the wider public. In addition, a sense of duty, which implies a high degree of acceptance of common norms, is very important to young people. This argues for a high performance orientation of the 16- to 29-year-olds.

Figure 1: Value orientation amongst 16—to 29-year-olds by gender (mean value*)
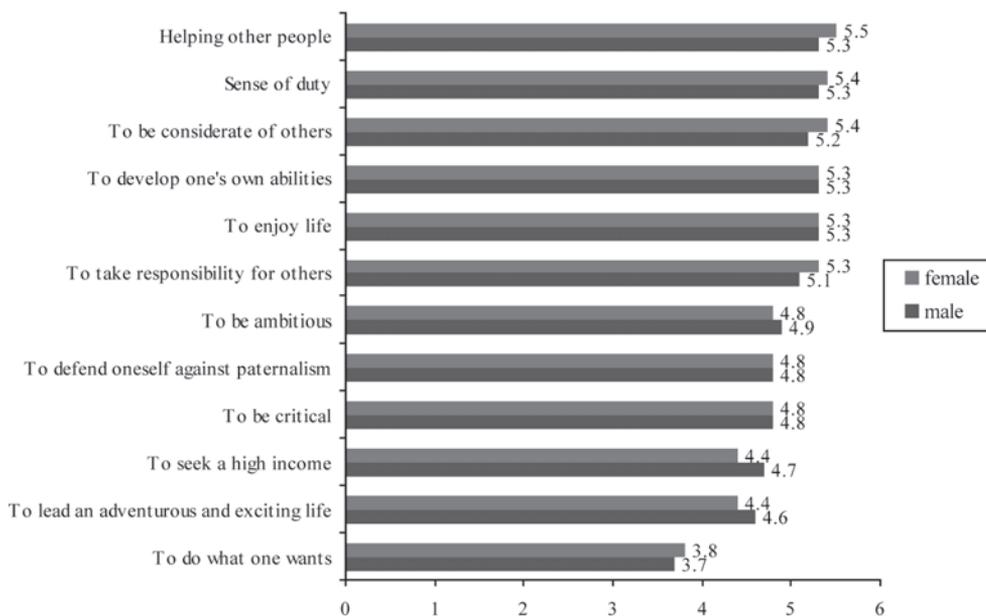


* Question: Please tell me how important it is for you personally to act according to each behavioural pattern that I am going to list. Please use a scale of 1, meaning not important at all, to 6, meaning very important.
Mean values of a scale of 1 = "not important at all", to 6 = "very important".
Source: AID:A - DJI Survey 2009 (weighted), 16- to 29-year-olds, N = 7.698

The survey also found that self-fulfilment and enjoyment of life are valued equally high as sense of duty. Young people today attribute almost the same level of importance to so-called secondary virtues, including sense of duty, as to the idea of self-fulfilment. As explained in more detail in Section 3, the co-existence of these values is an expression of changing values held by young people.

The options of "to be ambitious", "to defend oneself against paternalism" and "to be critical" rank in the middle range of the values priority list. The latter two value orientations gain importance especially in older adolescents when they leave the parental home and enter into vocational training or work. Young people with higher education levels consider readiness to criticise and to defend against paternalism to be of greater importance. Materialism ("to seek a high income") receives a relatively low valuation. This has much to do with the prevailing motivation of young people in the workplace who are driven by the desire to attain both secure and interesting work (cf. Gille, 2008a). However, materialism is considered more important by young people with lower levels of education and prospects of low income professions than by the better-educated.

The two hedonistic values "to lead an adventurous and exciting life" and "to do what one wants" have the lowest rates in the value preference list of young people and are deemed more important in younger age groups.

The value profile above illustrates the strong orientation of young people towards the community, self-fulfilment, sense of duty and pleasure. Following from this, this value profile is complemented by another interested in the importance young people assign to different areas of life (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Importance of areas of life for 16- to 29-year-olds (means*)
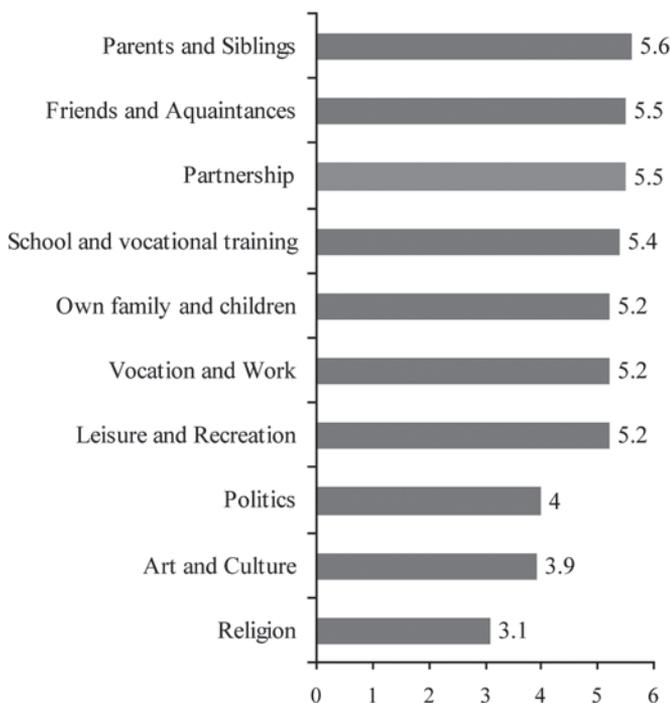


* Question: How important are the following areas of life to you personally?
Mean values of a scale of 1 = "not important at all", to 6 = "very important".
Source: AID:A - DJI Survey 2009 (weighted), 16- to 29-year-olds, N = 7.698

The biological family is the most important aspect of young people's lives. Reasons for this may not merely be the ever-longer stay in the parental home, but also the generally good relationship between young people and their parents (see Leven, Quenzel and Hurrelmann 2010). Friends and peers as well as the partner play a crucial role in the separation process of young people from their parental home as well as in the acquisition of a gender identity, and they are perceived as such by young people themselves. Noteworthy is the high importance placed on "education and vocational training" and on "work and vocation." This assessment reflects the fact that young people—and this applies to 16-year-olds in the same way as to 29-year-olds—are very well aware that only very good grades in school and high professional qualifications will increase their prospects in the labour market. They are clearly willing to prioritise further education, training and work in their life plans. Although young people in Germany today tend to postpone starting a family beyond their thirties, the idea of "own children and family" remains a very important issue even in the younger age groups (see Federal Statistics Office 2012).

It is possible—and this is described in Section 3 in greater detail—that the areas of life concerning "partnership" and having one's "own family and children" are valued so highly because the personal sphere offers a sense of emotional security and appears more predictable than the uncertain prospects regarding education and economic security. To young people, "leisure and recreation" are as important as school, work and having a family of their own. Areas of life such as "politics", "art and culture" and "religion" are rather marginal compared to the previously described aspects of life.

## 3. The Change in Values in Young People in Germany

The change in values can be characterised simply as an increase in the importance of the values of self-fulfilment, autonomy and equality, and a decrease in the importance of the values of coercion, material gain and authority. Social development is found to be the cause for this shift in values. These developments include but are not limited to: increasing social prosperity, the expansion of the welfare state, educational expansion, technological progress, the development of global markets, and the pluralisation of forms of life. Klages (2002) explains the change in values within the Federal Republic of Germany since the middle of the last century with an increase in self-fulfilment values and a loss in the importance of duty and acceptance values. Duty and acceptance values include values such as discipline, obedience, service and devotion to duty. The wide spectrum of self-fulfilment values includes not only individual needs for spontaneity, self-fulfilment, freedom and independence, as well as hedonistic, pleasure-oriented values, but also claims for political self -determination. Klages assumes a multidimensional and ambivalent change in values. In individuals, one can find plural value patterns that embody a very different mix of traditional and modern value systems.

The results of the DJI-Youth Surveys of 1992, 1997 and 2003 pointed towards a change in the orientation of the values of young people that is characterised by an increase of both self-fulfilment values as well as the values of duty, security and social behaviour (cf. Gille 2008a). Until the middle of the last century, the findings of the Shell Youth Studies, too, confirmed a change in the values in young people which has been characterised by the increasing importance of "traditional values" such as diligence and ambition and a rising quest for security, power and influence. The authors apply the concept of pragmatism to explain the range of values. This means that young people are more interested in dealing with concrete and practical issues and less in the overarching objectives of social reform (cf. Gensicke 2002).

If we consider the complete time series of the value orientations of young people, including the current results of the DJI Survey 2009 AID:A, it is possible to highlight a trend in the change of values of 16 to 29-year-olds for the period between 1992 and 2009. Figure 3 shows an assessment of young people in terms of twelve value orientations for the two survey dates, 1992 and 2009, arranged in rank order (on top are the core values; on the bottom the lowest-rated ones). While back in 1992, values of self-fulfilment such as "to develop one's own abilities" came first, in 2009, pro-societal values have risen in rank. "Helping other people" is ranked highest while "to take responsibility for others" and "to be considerate with others" are also becoming more important (see Figure 3). In 1992, "sense of duty" was a value ranked in the middle of the scale; since then, it has experienced a strong increase in importance. "To be ambitious" has also become more important as a value. In contrast, "to defend oneself against paternalism" and "to be critical" are two values that have lost in importance. While material security is important to young people, which suggests the increased importance of economic security as detected by the Shell Youth Studies (Gensicke 2010), "high income" is a value with declining importance. A hedonistic orientation captured by "to lead an adventurous and exciting life" and "to do what one wants" is consistently lowest in ranking order.

The value profile of today's adolescents reflects their ambition to orient themselves more closely on values of duty and achievement in the face of uncertain future prospects. While personal fulfilment and enjoyment of life continue to be important goals, there is also a greater emphasis on secondary virtues so as to also secure one's integration into society at large. This does not mean that adolescents and young adults today do not deal with critical social and political developments. Political interest and willingness to participate in political protest in the form of short-term actions such as demonstrations and petitions have increased (Gaiser and Gille 2012). An increase in spontaneous political action in the future may be expected as young people struggle to be heard in an aging society.

Figure 3: Ranking range of value orientations by means*, 16- to 29-year-olds, 1992 and 2009

|     | 1992 | 2009 |
|-----|------|------|
| 1.  | To develop one's own abilities | Helping other people |
| 2.  | To defend oneself against paternalism | Sense of duty |
| 3.  | To enjoy life | To be considerate of others |
| 4.  | To be critical | To develop one's own abilities |
| 5.  | To seek a high income | To enjoy life |
| 6.  | Helping other people | To take responsibility for others |
| 7.  | To be considerate of others | To be ambitious |
| 8.  | Sense of duty | To be critical |
| 9.  | To take responsibility for others | To defend oneself against paternalism |
| 10. | To be ambitious | To seek a high income |
| 11. | To lead an adventurous and exciting life | To lead an adventurous and exciting life |
| 12. | To do what one wants | To do what one wants |

*Ranks number 1 are the value orientations that are valued most, meaning that they have the highest averages.
Source: DJI Youth Survey 1992, AID:A - DJI Survey 2009 (weighted), 16- to 29-year-olds.

In addition, the 16th Shell Youth Study, which was conducted in 2010, continues to confirm a positive and stable alignment of the value system in adolescents and young adults: hard work and ambition continue to be on the rise. Nonetheless, security and order as well as creativity and independence, too, experienced a rise in appreciation (cf. Gensicke 2010).

Looking deeper at the overall results since the early 1990s, the growing importance attributed to the concepts of "vocation and work" as well as the private spheres of life such as "biological family", "partnership" and "one's own family and children" becomes apparent. Since the early 1990s, young people have perceived "vocation and work" to be more and more important. The increase in value attributed to "vocation and work" amongst adolescents and young adults in the Federal states of West Germany is more pronounced than in the Federal states of East Germany. West German young people are thus meeting young East Germans in the latter's consistently high valuation of vocation and work. The importance of vocation and work for young East Germans may be influenced by the employment model experienced by their parents—one where employment numbers were high and career progression was clear largely due to mandatory employment and gender equality in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). For young people today—both, in West and East Germany—employment is becoming a central issue ever earlier in life. In fact, 16- to 17-year-olds share this assessment on the crucial role of employment with their older counterparts in the age

bracket of 27- to 29-year-olds. This reflects the strong pressure exerted upon the young generation to fully participate in working life. However, the growing importance of work and career appears to have peaked in 2003 while one cannot yet say the same for the increasing importance of the private areas of life.

Not only are "vocation and work" becoming more important, but so are personal relationships. In view of worsening social conditions, young people are increasingly turning to private social networks for support. Personal relationships present reliable and durable cornerstones of their lives. As the comparison over time via the DJI studies shows, the biological family, peers, partnerships and one's own future family are seen as ever more important. A network of personal relationships provides young people with emotional security and puts lifestyle choices in the realm of the possible. Perhaps this helps young people compensate for feelings of a loss of orientation which have increased since the late 1990s (see Gaiser, Gille and de Rijke, 2011).

## 4. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

Young people today grow up in difficult social conditions and the transition to adulthood has become more complicated given the growth of precarious employment, particularly for younger age groups. Nonetheless, despite these worsening external factors, today's young display high levels of optimism in their ability to achieve their ambitions if they work hard enough. Both adolescents and young adults show a high degree of willingness to perform. Crucially, it is not selfishness that succeeds but values of compassion and community are gaining in importance as reference points for young people. Indeed, while young people are very concerned about societal developments such as the energy and financial crisis, the globalisation of labour markets and increasing environmental pollution, they remain steadfast with regard to their own life plans.

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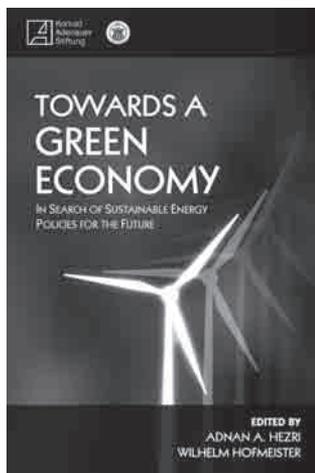
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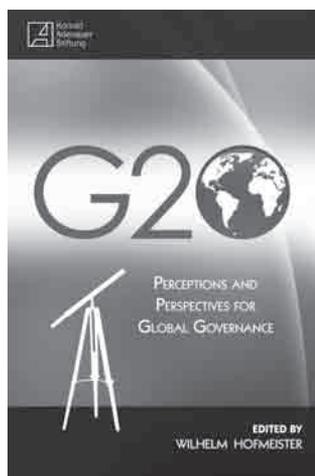
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