CHAPTER TWO

Trends in youth research globally

2A. Youth Research in Europe

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Interpreting European Youth Research

The enlargement of the *European Union* in May, 2004 means that between the 25 European Union countries there are now 75 million young people between 15 and 25 years old. The White Paper, *A New Impetus for European Youth,* was accepted by the *European Commission* on November 21, 2001. In this White Paper (COM 2001; 681) the Commission suggests a new framework for European cooperation in the youth policy issues implementing an open method of coordination. One of the aims of the White Paper is to improve public awareness of young people's concerns at the European level in the field of youth policy.

Gaining a greater understanding and knowledge of youth requires gathering information through statistical data, surveys and other forms of research, and the interpretation thereof.[i] However the channels of communication and dissemination on youth issues are not developed enough throughout Europe (Chisholm and Kovacheva 2002). At present the *Council of Europe* provides contact information about researchers and institutes via its *Directory of Youth and Sport* and *European Youth Research Network Correspondents*. The purpose for this researchers' network is to reflect on the European Commission's and Council of Europe's current agendas on youth research and youth policy reviews, and to focus on how to implement the European Commission

Common Objectives for a 'Better Understanding of Youth'. The aim is for correspondents to disseminate information through national youth research networks, or to spark an interest in developing national networks where they do not exist.

In fact much more effort is still needed to develop an effective infrastructure for European youth research co-operation. One important channel for the development of a youth research agenda for our continent has been the international network of the *International Sociological Association Research Committee on Youth Research* (RC34). European youth research strongly depends on forming and strengthening such research communities. At the same time social developments in Europe are moving in a more global direction, where the internationalization of cultural, economic, and political spheres means a globalization of problems like unemployment and social exclusion. At the same time we are witnessing the rise of small, local nationalistic groups among young people in some European countries.[ii] The fact is that Europeanness is a contested concept among young Europeans.[iii] There are many images of Europe with multiple local cultures, involving similarities and dissimilarities, and various levels of economic development, unemployment, urbanization, access to the means of mass communication and so forth.

The Eurobarometer surveys are designed regularly monitor the social and political attitudes in EU (European Union) and in EC (European Commission) societies. For example when the European Commission examined the views of 15 to 24-year olds on the functioning of the European Union, the survey asked two main questions: what practical measures can be taken to make young people identify more with Europe; and what are the key issues that the Convention should address? This Eurobarometer flash survey revealed that 15 to 24-year-olds feel that employment, solidarity, mobility and respect for democratic values are crucial for the European project. Survey data about young Europeans is plentiful, in contrast with the scarcity of comparative research concerning young Europeans, though at present there are also several comparative studies on young Europeans being funded by European Commission.[iv]

While it is not easy to find a common identity for European youth research – given the gap between different countries in terms of adequate funding in the field, and relatively underdeveloped transnational networks and professional mobility – some cooperation does exist. Since the mid-1980s already, the Council of Europe's *European Youth Centre* (EYC) has been making a significant contribution to building closer links between national youth research communities and between youth researchers and youth policy. After the UN *International Year of Young People* in 1985, the Council of Europe established an *Expert Committee on Youth Research and Documentation* from 1987 to 1989. This committee was interested in getting Central and Eastern European youth researchers to take part in European and International joint youth research conferences, and to become members of the International Sociological Association's (ISA) Research Committee 34 'Sociology of Youth`. Also in the mid-1980s the Nordic countries began to develop a Nordic youth research network through the *Nordic Youth Research Information Symposium* (NYRIS) series (Jonsson 1995; Hübner-Funk, Chisholm, du Bois-Reymond & Sellin 1995). The *Youth and Generation in Europe* Research Network was created at the end of the Budapest *European Sociological Association* (ESA) conference, in 1993. This network uses chiefly two instruments: an e-mail discussion list and the ESA congress.[v]

In the 1990s some networks in the field of youth studies were developed and coordinated by the European Union, the Council of Europe and other international institutions. Themes such as marginalization, social inclusion and exclusion, citizenship and European identity (see e.g. Helve & Wallace 2001) became themes for European discussions. In May, 2000 the European Commission sponsored a meeting in Lisbon to debate future challenges for European youth research and policy. This meeting brought together some 150 researchers and policy experts from across Europe. This shows that we can speak about European youth research. In 2003 the Council of Europe and the European Commission agreed to cooperate in the area of youth research in terms of a two year

partnership agreement. This cooperation is linked to the "White Paper" mentioned above. Briefly, European youth researchers have, since the 1990s, become experts on European youth policies.

This has helped the field of youth research to strengthen its autonomy by legitimating itself as a common field where theory and empirical research could meet. Theoretical discussions in youth research have related to social theory, globalization theory and new theoretical developments (e.g. Habermas, Bourdieu, Giddens, Beck & Bauman). Whereas earlier youth theories by Stanley Hall (and also Erik H. Erikson) from 1950s, 1960s and 1970s focused on working class boys, later youth research has also included girls. This is related to the growing participation of European and especially Nordic women in the labor market in the sixties, which has been followed by an explosion of women's participation in education. Nordic youth researchers have also been active in gender studies (e.g. Aapola 2000; Gordon 1990; Bjerrum, Nielsen & Rudberg 1994; Helve 1997). The first international girl research conference, *Alice in Wonderland,* was organized in Amsterdam in 1992.

There has always been a loosely knit network of Western-European scholars, with strong links to Australia and Canada. They share a similar approach, while still allowing for individual profiles. Western European youth research is strongly connected with the Post-War British subculture research tradition of the 1970s, when Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson published their book, *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) and Paul Willis did his famous study on *Profane Culture* (1978).[vi] These researchers were all associated with the *British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham.[vii] The CCCS has included many different kinds of school positions: feminist, post-modern, criminologist, constructivist, etc. Some CCCS positions have leaned on older traditions (e.g. Coleman and Eriksson), and newer French Bourdieuan positions also have emerged. Although the *Birmingham school* never achieved an autonomous position, it has had a high status among European youth researchers, especially in the Nordic countries.

The post-Birmingham developments imply a new split between cultural and social youth studies (cf. Furlong & Cartmel 1997). For example there have been two big research programs funded by the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC): the 1985-1991 research program, the *16-19 Initiative,* which included an associated comparative study of the transition from school to work in England and Germany (see Bynner 1987); and the *Youth, Citizenship and Social Change* program.[viii] The British Youth Research Group hopes to attract existing British Sociological Association (BSA) members as well as to promote links with other disciplines and agencies involved in youth work and research. A key aim of the group is to organize a number of one-day seminars and workshops which will explore all aspects of the study of young people.

The focus on cultural studies has been mostly on cultural production and innovation, whereas the focus of social science youth studies has been on social reproduction, not least on social inequalities (cf. Fornäs 1995).

As the largest and oldest Youth Research Institute in Europe, the German Youth Institute *Das Deutsche Jugendinstitut (DJI),* established in 1963, has played an important role in bringing youth onto the European Agenda. The first female president of RC34 Sibylle Hübner-Funk came from this institute. It has actively participated in many research projects on the European level, including the multi-national report to the European Commission: *Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe* (2001), coordinated by IARD at Milano, Italy. The institute contributed significantly to the Commission's White Paper on youth and youth policy.

The European Group for Integrated Social Research (EGRIS) is an East-West European research network (based in Germany). In its more than 10 years of activities it has led several EU research projects such as: "Misleading Trajectories: Evaluation of the Unintended Effects of Labour Market Integration Policies for Young Adults in Europe" and "Families and Transitions in Europe". It acts as a forum for a Europe-wide discussion on social integration and social policy.

In the 1980s youth research in Europe was mostly located in cultural studies, media studies and gender studies. However at the same time Nordic youth studies kept a broader inter-disciplinary profile, which was seen in the first Nordic Youth Research Symposium (NYRIS 1) in Oslo, in January, 1987 (see also Gudmundsson 2000). The Oslo symposium was the cornerstone for building up an interdisciplinary Nordic youth studies community. The 7th Nordic Youth Research Information Symposium, *Breaking and Making Borders*, which took place in Helsinki in the year 2000, was a Europe-wide conference. In NYRIS 7 more attention was given to gender as a specific focus throughout the program. In Nordic countries the youth cultural studies school has been especially strong in Sweden (see e.g., Fornäs 1994), and the theoretical concerns have been focused more on identity or culture than on general gender theory (see also Jonsson, Helve & Wichström 2003).

Formal Structures of Youth Research: A Nordic Model

Now we try to characterize the formal structures of youth research in Europe, especially in the Nordic countries, where the infrastructure of the youth research is extensively developed. compared to the fact that youth research is still a relatively new research field. Researchers are dispersed through several academic disciplines and institutes. In the Nordic countries the first Nordic Youth Research Symposium, in 1987, was the start of *NYRI*, the *Nordic Youth Research Institute* and Nordic Youth Research cooperation. NYRI is the general organization for a range of networking activities and information systems for youth researchers in the Nordic countries: Denmark (including the Faroe Islands and Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The coordination of NYRI activities is financed by the *Nordic Council of Ministers* through a *Nordic Youth Research Coordinator*, and by the national youth ministries through an Advisory Group (AG). This research organization and strategy has developed connections between youth administrators, youth organizations, national youth councils and youth researchers on specific

topics in need of more research-based information. NYRI has also had connections with the Council of Europe[ix] and EU youth research. About 1700 researchers and users of research based information have been linked through NYRI networks. The development of this cooperation started in 1985, and the present framework was established in 1992.[x]

A research project on living conditions of young people in the Nordic periphery began in 2001. This study has investigated young people living in remote regions of Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Denmark, Greenland, Norway and Sweden, using methods of secondary analysis. The research project focused on societal, individual and cultural factors that influence the development of young people into adults in the periphery. The project also analyzed processes of integration and marginalization among young people in the periphery.[xi] A Nordic-Baltic PhD level doctoral school network of 36 youth researchers and 23 universities with workshops and summer school courses began in 2000. The Youth Research Network invites junior researchers into effective and regular cooperation with Nordic and Baltic Universities and research institutions. In the year 2003 Russia as well became involved in the network. This Youth Research Network is interdisciplinary. There are posts available for young researchers, for example, from the fields of cultural, social, psychological and educational studies. The costs of participating in the workshops and summer schools are paid by *NorFa*, the *Nordic Academy for Advanced Study Network*.[xii]

NYRIS symposiums and the publication of the Nordic Journal of Youth Research, *YOUNG*[xiii]*,* have been interrelated, each supporting the other and being influenced by Nordic networks of youth research. YOUNG has become (together with the international *Journal of Youth Studies*) one of the major academic journals in the youth studies arena.[xiv] YOUNG has initiated dialogue between disciplines concerned with youth such as sociology, political science, pedagogy, psychology, anthropology, ethnology, cultural geography, economics, criminology, law, history, media studies, gender studies, medicine, psychiatry, literature, musicology, film, theatre, linguistics and cultural studies.

In the Nordic countries, as well as in other countries of Europe and other parts of the world, many new things are happening in the field of youth research, youth work and youth policy: In Finland the *Youth Research Society,* established in 1987, has around 200 members. Early in 1999 the Society in turn founded a new research group called *Nuorisotutkimusverkosto (The Youth Research Network),* involving over 20 researchers and projects, financed mainly by the state. The network was based on the *Youth Research 2000* program, which began in 1994. The Finnish Scientific Journal of youth research, *Nuorisotutkimus,* had its 20th anniversary in 2003.

The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA), *Rannsóknir og Greining,* is an independent non-profit organization. The Centre analyzes the social well-being of youth in Iceland, and works closely with various governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide funding and logistic support for research regarding adolescent problems and problem behavior.

The Danish Youth Research Centre in Roskilde, *CeFu,* organized the eighth NYRIS Symposium, *Youth Voice and Noise,* in the year 2003. The Danish Youth Council and Roskilde University have cooperated to develop the Centre as a new structure. The Centre is closely associated with members coming from different central institutions, organizations and enterprises in Denmark, which thus play a part in ensuring that research is in contact with environments that work with young people on a daily basis.

In Norway a new Youth Research Journal, *Ungdomsforskning,* started in 2001, published by *NOVA*.[xv] The youth research group at NOVA is multi-disciplinary, comprising mostly sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists. Empirical research on adolescents is based on local and regional qualitative and quantitative studies, as well as national surveys. Its main research topics are youth culture and leisure activities, school adjustment, transitions from school to employment, alcohol and drug use, delinquency and conduct problems, inter-generational relations and issues concerning ethnicity and a multi-cultural society.

In Sweden the Swedish Council for Labour and Social Science Research, *Forskningsrådet för arbetsliv och socialvetenskap*, has evaluated Swedish youth research (*Youth Research in Sweden, 1995-2001. An Evaluation Report*; Jonsson, Helve and Wichström 2003). According to their evaluation there is a fundamental division in the field of youth research: The first section is associated with the Birmingham school Cultural Studies, which often focuses on how young people are socially constructed as youth, how they shape their identity and what lifestyles they choose. The other tradition includes studies in academic disciplines ranging from social medicine/epidemiology and psychology to social work, education, the humanities and sociology.

At the Nordic level, youth research has been active with the *Unga i Norden* (Nordic Youth) research program. The different networks have integrated platforms for knowledge-based decision making. This multidisciplinary research program has been developed in cooperation with researchers, administrators and politicians. For example the *Barents Youth Research Network* and *Arctic Youth Research Network* are new networks founded through cooperation between the Nordic countries. The key themes of these programs have been the living conditions of young people, the transition from childhood to adulthood and Nordic identity and youth culture (cf. Bjurtström, 1997). These topics embrace comparative research, evaluation research and both quantitative and qualitative research.

Modernizing Youth. Youth Research in Italy

In the following chapter we focus on issues that have been at the forefront for young people and youth research for the past fifty years in Europe. Our case is taken from Italian youth research but it fits in many ways also to the youth and youth research in other European countries specially in Southern Europe. We will see how the modernizing path that transformed Italy in a few decades from an agricultural country to a post-industrial one also thoroughly changed youth profiles. The

studies briefly taken into consideration here highlight the nature of these changes and their main characteristics.

The birth of youth: the fifties and sixties

The few studies done in Italy in the early fifties (Grasso 1954; Dursi 1958) give us a fairly dull picture of youth. Young people seemed to be in a defensive position, subjected to intense forms of social control, intent mainly on introspection and uninterested in the social and political situation. This changed, however, beginning in the last years of the fifties with the arrival of the "economic boom" – the period of rapid and intense economic growth, continuing into the early sixties, that radically transformed the Italian social landscape (Ginsborg, 1989). The flight from rural areas[xvi], especially by younger people, was a tool for asserting their right to an existence different from that of the older generations.

Together with the spread of consumer goods – material and symbolic emblems of economic development – this period also revealed the first forms of youth culture in the proper sense. In fact, young people used consumer goods to trace their own generational profile distinct from that of adults: from scooters to record albums, from clothing to pictures of stars, consumer goods and their symbols became an effective tool of emancipation from the world of adults. As documented by studies of the time (cf. Cristofori, 2002) – no matter whether conducted in cities like Milan (Diena, 1960) or Genoa (L. Cavalli, 1959) or in provincial Tuscany (Carbonaro & Lumachi, 1962) or Veneto (Allum & Diamanti, 1986) – it was primarily by means of consumer goods that young people, workers and students, were able to construct spaces of freedom and independence unknown to earlier youth generations.

New consumption possibilities also appeared to be of great importance in decoding the messages carried by the "gangs" of juveniles who menacingly populated urban areas in the early sixties (Piccone Stella, 1993). Through various kinds of transgression, first and foremost in acts of

gratuitous delinquency, groups of young people – male and mainly of working-class origin – attempted to translate into daily practice the hedonism being touted by mass culture. This is the picture emerging from a number of studies on the phenomenon of Italian *teddy boys* (Bertolini, 1964) conducted mainly by psychologists, pedagogues and criminologists. At that time, in fact, Italian sociology was only minimally concerned with this phenomenon.

Instead, sociologists in those years were asking themselves about the new generational identity of so-called "normal youth". Research done at the time in Milan (Baglioni, 1962), for example, identified among young people (as Schelsky had done in Germany some years earlier) a *gray* generation, the so-called generation of the three M's: ***m**oglie* (wife), ***m**acchina* (car) ***m**estiere* (job), an image that research by Alfassio Grimaldi and Bertoni (1964) would later confirm: a generation without flights of fancy and with little interest in politics, desirous only of playing adult roles as soon as possible.

In the mid-sixties a new profile of the youth world began to take shape, parallel to an increase in secondary school attendance and the spread of great optimism about the future. Meanwhile, in the years preceding 1968 the beat culture began to flourish. According to a study done in Milan in 1967 (Ardigò et al., 1968), the young people in the beat movement were mainly middle and lower-middle class, anti-authority, anti-consumption and fighting against the constituted order that the adult generation embodied. Often midway between dissent and consumption, at least in its mass expressions,[xvii] the beat generation spread a message of liberation from dominant cultural schemes and searched for more authentic relations. In fact, it paved the way for the long youth movement era, which in Italy lasted until the end of the seventies.

From the "movement era" to the "era of uncertainty"

Anti-authoritarianism and the redefinition of the borders between public and private; the primacy of politics and the centrality of daily life as an arena in which to challenge power; a rejection of book-

learning in favor of a closer relation between theory and practice; new forms of communication – these were key points of the ’68 movement. They were not analyzed in sociological research, but rather by the movement’s young leaders (Bobbio & Viale, 1968; Viale, 1978). Sociological studies in this period instead focused on the change in values that involved the entire world of youth, not just the activist minority. A good illustration of this trend can be found in the results of a survey done in 1969 by Doxa on behalf of Shell (Inchiesta Shell, 1970). What emerged, among other things, was the conviction – shared by almost all the young people interviewed – of being involved in an authentic conflict with the adult world. Another survey, conducted by the ISVET a year later (Scarpati, 1973) painted a picture of youth in terms of an increasing marginalization. Young people suffered from this due to mechanisms of social exclusion, both at school and in the working world, where youth unemployment was on the rise. These processes went side by side with youth’s rejection of the traditional channels of political participation, such as party affiliations.

Thinking in a marginal key was very popular in research on youth throughout the seventies. Aside from the specific research areas – whether young people’s relations with the productive sphere (Annunziata & Moscati, 1978) or the transformation of, and crisis in, the traditional socialization apparatus (Bassi & Pilati,1978) – most of the analysis of a sociological, political or cultural nature in those years tended to propose a similar interpretive scheme, with a conjunction of two aspects at its base. On the one hand there was the social and productive marginality of a major part of the youth world – the so-called “non-guaranteed people”: students not attending classes, student-workers doing the many little jobs that do not offer identity, unemployed young people in the suburbs (De Masi, 1978) – and on the other, the emergence of a new subjectivity. From this interweaving sprang the movement of ’77 and the social and political body that constituted its reference point: the “youth proletariat”. A contemporary of neo-feminism, the ’77 movement borrowed from it the informal, small-group organizational structure and many of the keywords

centered on beginning by oneself to understand the world, and the right to be different (Sorlini, 1977).

The youth world emerged from this period – exceptional in the intensity of its forms of protest and cultural innovation – with a profile very different from that of the previous decade. In a seminal study of those years Alessandro Cavalli proposed considering the transformation in terms of a shift in the youthful stage of life from "process" to "condition": while in the first case young people appear to be "in transit" towards adulthood and their eyes are on the future, in the second youth is characterized as "awaiting an unpredictable outcome" (Cavalli, 1980, p. 524) and is trapped within the confines of the present.

Meanwhile, in the late seventies and early eighties – the end of the "movement era" – a portrait of youthful action in terms of a defensive individualism, inwardly oriented and indifferent to social problems, an expression of a "culture of narcissism" (c.f. Featherstone, 1991) was making headway. But a study of students in Turin in the late eighties (Ricolfi & Sciolla, 1980) refuted these interpretations. Young people did not manifest forms of egocentric individualism or a retreat from the social. Instead, they were expressing new concepts of politics (for example, "be yourself" was considered political); they gave great importance to relationships and criticized social conformism. Higher levels of education, interwoven with the by now vast diffusion of media networks, constituted the ideal *humus* for expanding this view. While the most radical political content was being toned down, a closer and closer connection was being forged between a "culture of the quotidian", attention to the "personal" and greater reflexivity, and was destined to get stronger and more consolidated in subsequent decades.

In the eighties a great deal of research was devoted to youth and its cultural expressions (including studies by Guala 1983; Scanagatta 1984; Caioli et al. 1986; Ricolfi, Scamuzzi and Sciolla 1988). A backward glance reveals – although through different routes and methods – some common accents: the new youth culture's privileged relations with pragmatism and the growth of a

“subjectivity culture” (Cesareo 1984). For example, in a well-known study, Garelli (1984) utilizes the term “daily-life generation” to characterize the youth world of these years, distanced from ideologies and attentive to the sphere of sociality and the expression of personal needs.

Another important study in the eighties (Cavalli 1985; cf. Leccardi 1990) put into focus the transformations that in the meantime had occurred in the methods and forms of young people’s biographical construction and identity definition. There were two particularly innovative dimensions to this study, of a qualitative nature. First there was the choice of the theme of time (treated in the dimensions of historical, biographical and quotidian time) as a tool with which to analyze the condition of youth as a whole; secondly, the use of time to call attention to the break in connections between routes of identity definition and mechanisms of inter-generational transmission.

Beginning in the late eighties, the relationship between transformations in the experience of time, changes in routes of identity and the construction of modes of relating to the public sphere negotiated mainly by small groups (Diamanti, 1999) became the background for numerous studies of the condition of youth in Italy. Worth mentioning among these are the studies sponsored by the IARD research institute. Founded in 1961, this institute (now well known throughout Europe) sponsors theoretical studies and empirical surveys in the field of youth and education, with approaches that integrate the viewpoints of the different social sciences. Since starting in 1983 and at four-year intervals, the IARD has been surveying Italian youth (Cavalli et al. 1984; Cavalli & de Lillo 1988; 1993; Buzzi, Cavalli & de Lillo 1997; 2002). Through the years this has created an authentic observatory on youth, which analyzes “either with periodic, nationwide surveys or with specific studies, the direction, pace and intensity of changes involving the attitudes, orientations, expectations and behavior of young people” (Cavalli & de Lillo, 1988, p. 9).

Among other things, IARD research has drawn a realistic picture of the transformations occurring in the past decades in young people’s transition to adulthood. Following European trends,

this transition has not only been extended in temporal terms but it has become more and more fragmented. In particular, in Italy as in other Mediterranean countries, this process has come to coincide with a prolonged stay in the family of origin, the so-called "*famiglia lunga*" ("long family"): at the end of the nineties, half of Italian men and a third of Italian women were still, at age 29, living with their parents.

Overall, the IARD surveys underscore how the present youthful stage of life is dominated by growing uncertainty, along with great distrust of social institutions. The values that count are increasingly the ones tied to the private sphere (family, love, friendship). Consumer culture is central to identity while decisions are experienced as revocable. The temporal horizon in which one lives tends to contract, and the present becomes the preferred point of reference for action. (Leccardi, 1999.)

Political Aspects of Youth Research in Eastern and Central Europe

Finally we examine some political aspects of European youth research in Eastern and Central Europe. It was the proletariat, the 'leading working class,' that the early Communist regimes proclaimed as the beneficiary of their victory in the mid 20th century (see for example Sztachelski 1950, cited in Sokolowska & Richard 1990, p. 79). The 'proletarian dictatorship' was meant to solve all social problems of the bourgeois society and the ruling parties took its realization seriously, carrying out a forced nationalization of the finance sector, industry and land in most countries, Poland being a notable exception from the latter. When the regimes somewhat softened in late 50s, the party nomenclature needed a new ideological construct to demonstrate the shift in their strategy. It was then that youth was discovered as the group with the most significant role in this developed stage of the Communist construction. Young people were seen as being less burdened with the values and practices of the capitalist past than the older generations, and hence more prone to build and live in the classless Communist society.

The establishment of youth studies as a legitimate academic discipline in East Central Europe and the setting up of its research agenda in the 1960s and 70s came with the rising political concerns and amounting economic difficulties in the Soviet camp. First in the German Democratic Republic in 1966, then in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and elsewhere youth research institutes were founded, or research centres were established at the Academies of Sciences and major universities. This strategy followed ideological considerations – youth was perceived as the most optimistic and hence the least dangerous group to be studied empirically. In countries where youth protest movements were mounting, as in Slovenia, the communist state did not develop institutional structures for youth research (Ule & Rener, 1998). Despite the ideological underpinning, the studies, which youth institutes carried out, were among the best examples of empirical research in the eastern part of the continent during the communist regimes while most other fields of sociology were abstractly theoretical and under the strong influence of the official Marxist ideology.

The first phase of youth research in the state socialist countries also gave rise to important conceptual reflections. It started with discussions of class and age as stratifying factors and how to specify youth as a social group, given the biological and developmental components (Mitev, 1969). The work of Russian sociologist Igor Kon (1967) provided an elaborate concept of socialisation, linking the development of the personality to the specific social relations and institutions. The Romanian researcher Fred Mahler (1983) developed the idea of juventisation to reflect the innovation that young people introduce into society and envisioned the development of youth research into the science of juventology (see Mahler, 1983).

In the 80s youth studies faced new social challenges - the economic limitations of the centrally planned economy becoming more obvious, attempts were made to free space for private initiative. Young people were still the main beneficiaries of the state social policy and were expected to contribute to the intensification and technological innovation of the economy. The

amounting problems and discontent among youth were interpreted as a mismatch between their growing aspirations and the 'still' limited job opportunities. Youth researchers have gathered much empirical information about the varying expectations and experiences of young people and started conceptualising youth as comprised of different subgroups: students, workers, peasants. The Bulgarian and Russian researchers theorised about the self-realisation of the personality (See for an overview of the concept Kharchenko, 1999) while the Baltic sociologists advanced the concept of self-determination. The latter focused on the choices young people make during their transitions through life - from one educational stage to another, from education to work, from parents' family to creating their own, etc. Using this paradigm, sociologists insisted on looking closer at young people's own beliefs and values, which were largely neglected up to then (cf. Saarniit 1998, pp. 43-66).

During this second stage (1980s), youth research was already well institutionalised and abundantly subsidised in most Warsaw Pact countries. The communist regimes fostered international co-operation in the youth field in the attempt to advertise the growing successes of the state youth policy. East-West communication flourished despite the obvious barriers - the different political and cultural contexts, different themes and theoretical perspectives, even different methodologies (up to then youth studies in the eastern half were almost wholly identified with large-scale quantitative surveys while small-scale qualitative studies dominated in many research traditions in the West). Good examples were the projects dedicated to the International Youth Year in 1985. The first two presidents of RC34 came from South-East Europe – the Romanian Ovidiu Badina and the Bulgarian Petar-Emil Mitev. International conferences and seminars were organised on a regular base in Primorsko, Costinesti, Leipzig, Moscow, Bratislava. While German youth researchers from the institutes in Munich and Leipzig were not allowed officially to communicate with each other, Munich, Sofia and Bucharest had a 'cultural contract' to hold regular alternating

conferences year by year. The only World Congress of Sociology held in Eastern Europe was organised in 1970 in Varna, Bulgaria.

The period of the 80s was also a time of tightening of state control over youth research. When researchers turned to topics that were inconsistent with the tale of the successful youth policy and loyal youth, such as the deviant behaviour of the 'non-formals' (youth dissident groups), funding was withdrawn. Individual researchers and whole institutes were punished and banned from participation in international research projects or in conferences and seminars abroad. In Romania for example, Chaushesku's regime was particularly oppressive towards the widely known youth researchers Fred Mahler and Ovidiu Badina.

The social transformation in the region after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 affected youth studies in many ways. Although young people played a prominent role in the 'gentle' revolutions in the Soviet Block countries, they lost their privileged position which they enjoyed in the ideology and social policy of the communist regimes. A process of deconstruction of youth took place, similar to the one in advanced market societies: such as the prolongation of the youth phase and the loss of the clear cut age boundaries, the increasing differentiation and individualisation of young people (Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1998). The dominant liberal ideology in most CEE countries stressed the social role of individualism and implied that if only all individuals, independently of their age, were left free from the party and state control, their entrepreneuring activity would alleviate all social problems. Young people were perceived as no longer needing privileges from a patronising state, what they needed were equal chances in life. The disappearance of the former mass official youth organisations is another significant factor for the deconstruction of youth under post-communism. Numerous new youth associations have a too thin spread to make a difference in public discourse and policy considerations.

In this third phase youth research infrastructure suffered a major blow - some institutes were closed as the one in Bulgaria, while others found themselves deprived of the abundant state

financing as the Romanian Institute. The old research institutions had to look for new sources of funding, and many, as the Russian Youth Institute in Moscow, discovered them in teaching courses in prestigious subjects such as psychology or business studies or producing opinion polls and market research. Individual researchers also left youth studies in large numbers to go to the more profitable spheres of private businesses, politics, or advertising. As young people themselves, some youth researchers ventured upon the road of emigration abroad, as far away as the United States and Australia. Those who persisted in the youth field in CEE countries had to rediscover small-scale studies since the sources for financing large nation-wide surveys had disappeared.

The late 1990s were a period of overcoming the initial crisis in society and in youth research. Addressing the increasing individualisation and differentiation among young people, the focus of the social construction of youth was placed on the specific problems of specific groups among youth: the young homeless, the young unemployed, the young drug addicts etc. Youth started to be seen as posing problems to society and not as active resource persons. This resulted in a proliferation of agencies and state departments dealing with youth: education, health, labour, police and army, each of them with differing definitions and diverging approaches to finding solutions.

A process of institutional pluralism took place in the field of youth studies with many new centres coming into being which was not possible when there had been only one recognised state institute in each country. The new university departments teaching social sciences and the numerous marketing and polling companies also started producing youth research. The Centre for Social Psychology/Youth Studies in Slovenia can be cited as an illustration of this trend, developing into a well established and internationally recognised institution for youth research. With the generational change youth research experienced a conceptual opening up for new themes and ideas, new approaches and methodologies. Instead of expecting a "juventisation" (cf. Mahler, 1983) of society, youth researchers revealed problems in the social integration of youth (Chuprov & Zubok,

1998) and focused on their social exclusion. A most remarkable feature of the fourth stage of youth research in CEE is the methodological pluralism. National and international surveys were matched with case-study approaches, life history and focus group interviewing.

Economic pressures account for a lot of this change. The new centres found themselves competing for scarce sources of funding. These came either directly from foreign funding agencies such as the programmes of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, national governments such as the German, Austrian, Dutch, private foundations such as Ford, MacArthur, the Open Society, or local voluntary organisations, which had the resources and skills to use research data. Again, in most cases this meant NGOs with foreign affiliations. This situation had two important consequences. The national research agenda was largely formed by the visions and perceptions of outside bodies with the risk of missing problems specific to the conditions of youth in the region. Second, there was a lot of interest in comparative studies, in Western concepts and methodologies. The East-West collaboration gave birth to innovative studies (See for example Roberts and Machacek, 1997; Bynner and Koklygina, 1995; Pilkington et al, 2002), on which basis many informal networks developed. These contacts succeeded largely due (or thanks) to the personal devotion of researchers on both sides, strong enough to overcome travel difficulties, loss of mail, collapse of banks, road blockades, etc.

The 21st century started with renewed co-operation between youth researchers and policy makers in many countries in the region and on the European arena, as shown in the Council of Europe process of review of the national youth policies in Estonia, Rumania and Lithuania. Youth is studied as an active agent in European integration (Baranovic, 2002) and youth participation has become a new topic for research (Kovacheva, 2000). The European and global concerns are matched with research into local problems, such as ethnic tolerance among young people in the multicultural societies in the Balkans (Mitev and Riordan, 2004) or the relations between generations in the transforming Russian society (Semenova, 2002).

The development of youth studies in Eastern and Central Europe has been strongly influenced by the social upheavals in the region in the 20th century. Under state socialism they were under strong pressure to demonstrate the successes of the centralized social policy of the one-party regime. Nevertheless, they managed to reveal some true problems of young people and to create innovative concepts for their interpretation. In the post-Communist era youth research is in a process of reconstruction, experiencing a pluralization of scientific paradigms and institutional structures. Within individual countries youth research lost the security of abundant state support in the same way that young people yielded their privileged position in ideology and welfare. What youth studies gained was in the wider arena of European cooperation. The keywords for European youth research are: building a European infrastructure for youth research networks and forgetting pseudo-East/West borders in a 'New Europe'. For this reason, currently, European youth research cooperation is a reality and it has better perspectives than in the 20th century.

Concluding notes

In this article our focus has mainly been on the geographical and cultural regions of Europe. The discussion of European youth research cannot be illustrated only with analyses of geographically opposed regions of Europe: Northern vs. Southern Europe / Eastern vs. Western Europe. The fact of the matter is that the New Europe is a historical, political, cultural, artistic, technological and military entity. This should mean that the role of the EU and its institutions, and old and new ideologies in Europe, contribute to a cultural environment in which we have to define new strategies for European youth research cooperation. Since the end of the Cold War, the unification of Germany, the collapse of Communist regimes, and the violent disintegration of former Yugoslavia there is a growing realization that youth research in Europe still partly suffers from the lack of a European infrastructure, insufficient funding, lack of an environment to stimulate research and exploit results, and the fragmented nature of activities and the distribution of resources.

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Notes

[i] Source: Cover letter of the European Commission questionnaire on "Greater Understanding for Youth", 1993.

[ii] Eurobarometer Flash Survey, carried out between May 27 and June 16, 2002, with a representative sample of 7558 young people.

[iii] The complex relation between young people and Europe is revealed by their attitudes towards the idea of a European identity. See, Chisholm, du Bois-Reymond & Coffield 1995; Lagrée 2000; and Leccardi 2001.

[iv] Cf. *Rural Young People in Changing Europe. A Comparative Study of Living Conditions of Rural Young People in Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden*, Helve (ed.) 2000.

[v] More than 200 European youth sociologists are registered as member of this e-mail forum.

[vi] In the 1990s subcultures came out in new forms as fan and consumer cultures (Featherstone 1991), and common cultures (Willis 1990).

[vii] Willis and Jeffersson had been postgraduate students at the Centre and Hall was its director.

[viii] Directed by Liza Catan. The project ended in 2003. This programme involves 17 different pieces of research, ranging from social exclusion to citizenship.

[ix] On the occasion of the 5th Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Youth in Bucharest, April 27-29, 1998, the Council of Europe Youth Directorate published an information document entitled *25 Years of Youth Policy in the Council of Europe: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead*. It points out that the years 1964 – 1969 were the actual stimulus for the creation of European youth policy, when the conflict between young people and society and its values had plainly manifested itself. For that reason the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided in May, 1968 to regularly discuss the situation of youth in Europe and recommended that the European Youth Centre and the European Youth Foundation be established.

[x] See the NYRI website: http://www.alli.fi/nyri/index.htm.

[xi] Helve, H. (ed.) 2003: *Ung i utkant. Aktuell forskning om glesbygdsungdomar i Norden*.

[xii] NorFA is a network of Nordic PhD-level doctoral schools with working connections to youth policy and youth work in the Nordic countries, sponsored by the Nordic Scientific Academy.

[xiii] YOUNG was originally printed in Sweden. The abstracts and articles have also been published in NYRI. The editorial board has been Nordic. Following negotiations with Sage publications, since 2003 the Journal 'Young' has been published by Sage.

[xiv] See more http://www.alli.fi/nyri/young/index.htm

[xv] NOVA – Norwegian Social Research – is a national research institute. The board of directors is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research. The National Assembly, Stortinget, provides the basic funding. The aim of the institute is to develop knowledge and understanding of social conditions and processes of change. It focuses on issues of life-course events, level of living conditions and aspects of life-quality as well as on programs and services provided by the welfare system.

[xvi] After the Second World War, about half the working population was employed in the primary sector.

[xvii] The reference is to the music which, through the Beatles and Rolling Stones, spread across Europe, to youth-oriented magazines, styles of clothing and looks.