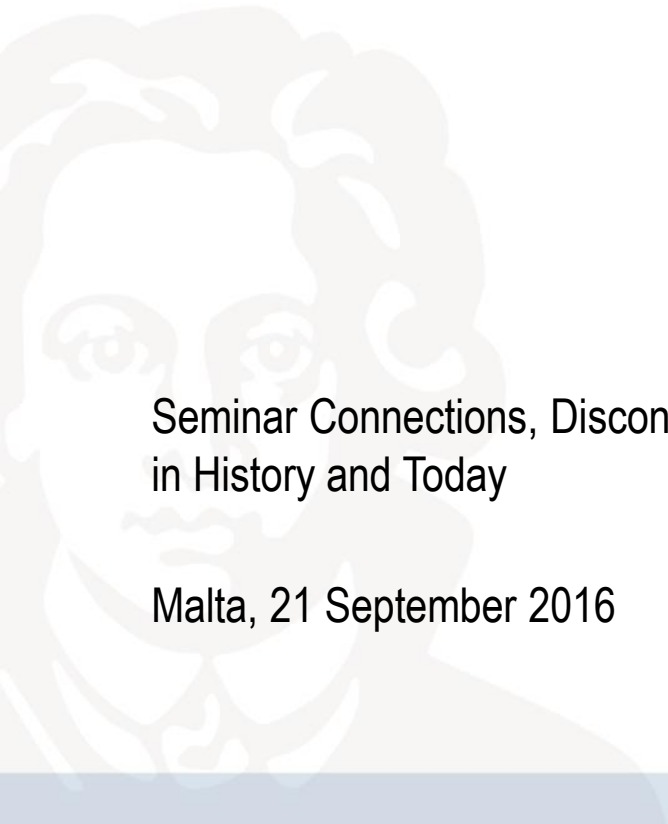


Axel Pohl

# Welfare Regimes and Youth Work

Seminar Connections, Disconnections and Reconnections – The Social Dimension of Youth Work in History and Today

Malta, 21 September 2016



# Aims and overview

- the genesis of transition regimes in comparative welfare research,
- its strengths and weaknesses,
- some of its developments in recent time
- benefits we can have from thinking this way when discussing the where froms and whereabouts of youth work today.



# First reconnection: Youth Work? Youth?

- Youth work depends on the conception of “youth”“
- Historically and locally contingent meaning
- “Youth as a problem” – also in research
- Projection of society’s hopes and fears

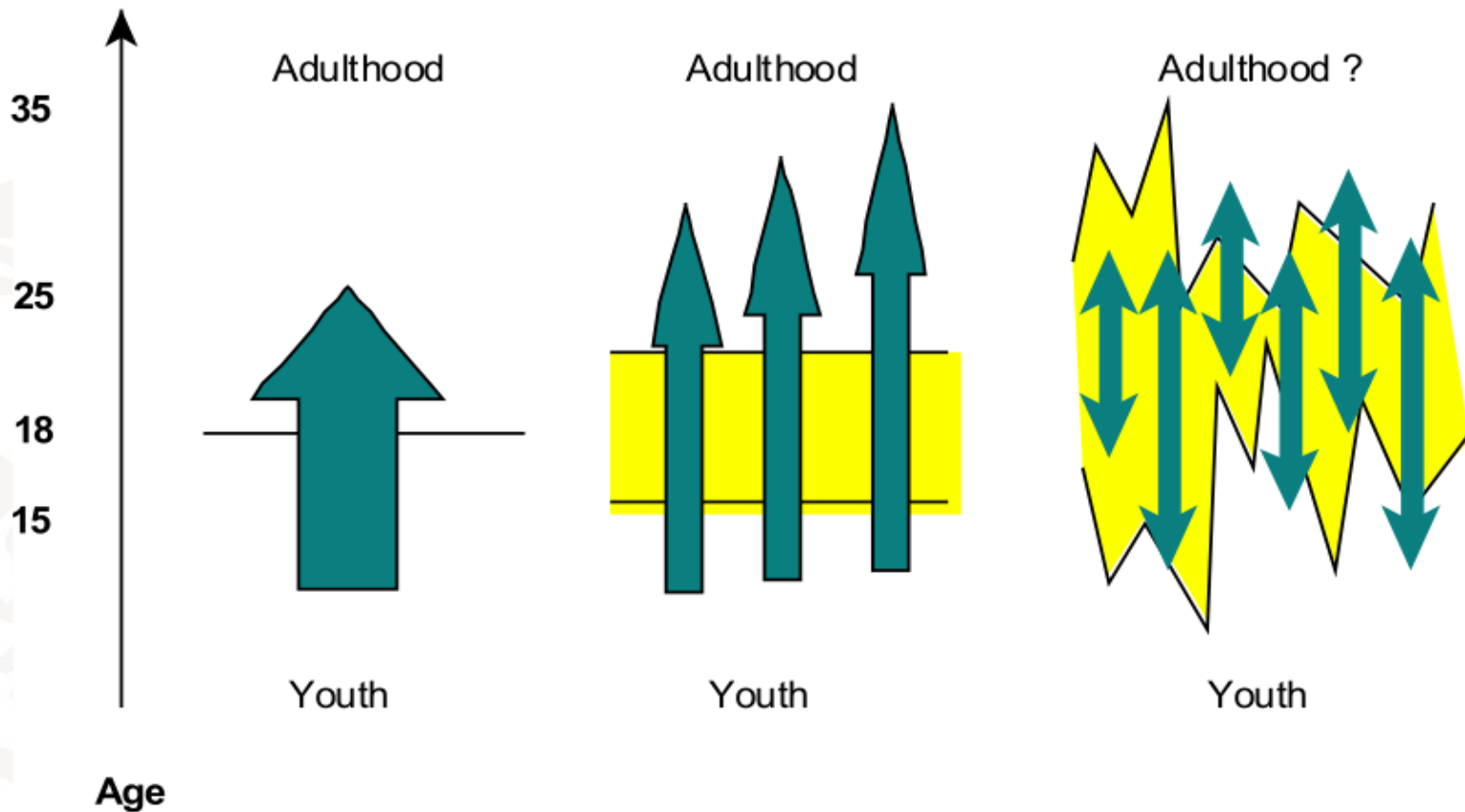


# Example: Different concepts of youth and young adulthood

Transition as a linear and homogeneous status passage

Transition as a life phase composed of prolonged and diversified status passages

Reversible and fragmented Yo-yo-transitions with uncertain perspectives



# Second reconnection: Esping-Andersen's Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism

- rooted in the analysis of the **political economy** of the welfare state
- Basic idea: **de-commodification** of labour and welfare
- Commodification? Cf. the political economy of youth work



# Third reconnection: Comparative research on youth transitions (EGRIS)

- Misleading trajectories. Non-intended effects of employment policies for young adults (1998-2001)
  - Comparative analysis on education and training for youth workers (IARD study on youth policy 2001)
  - Youth policy and participation. Potentials of participation and informal learning for young people's transitions to the labour market (2001-2004)
  - Thematic study concerning policy measures for disadvantaged youth (2005)
  - Governance of educational trajectories in Europe. Access, coping and relevance of education for young people (2010-2013)
- Traditional focus of youth research on “youth as a problem” → studies included support mechanisms for coping with transitions

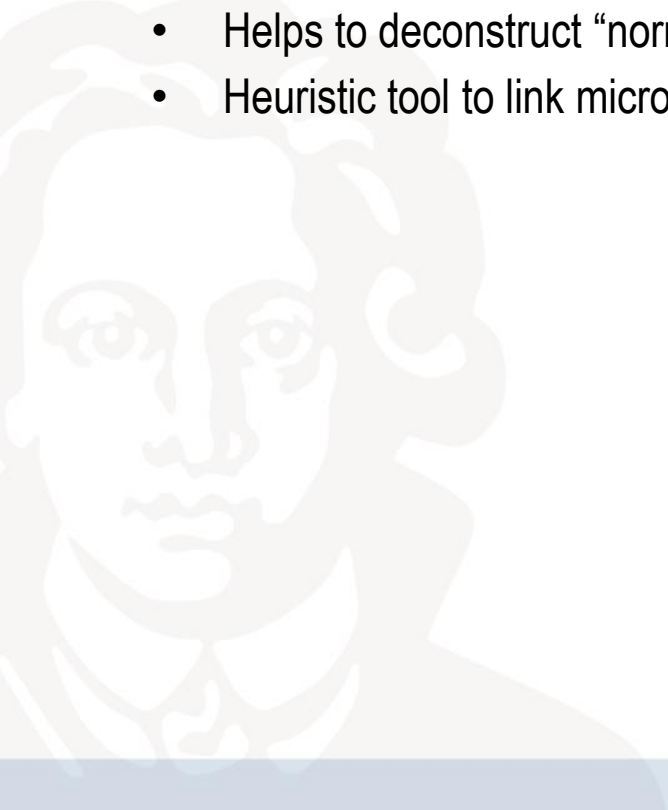
# Fourth reconnection: Youth transition regimes

## Combination of

- socio-economic structures
- institutional arrangements
- socio-cultural constructions of "normalities"

## Main points

- Helps to deconstruct “normalities” as products of structures and discourses
- Heuristic tool to link micro, meso- and macro-levels



# Regimes of youth transitions (1)

## Socio-economic dimension

- *Labour market, economy, inequality*

## Institutional dimension

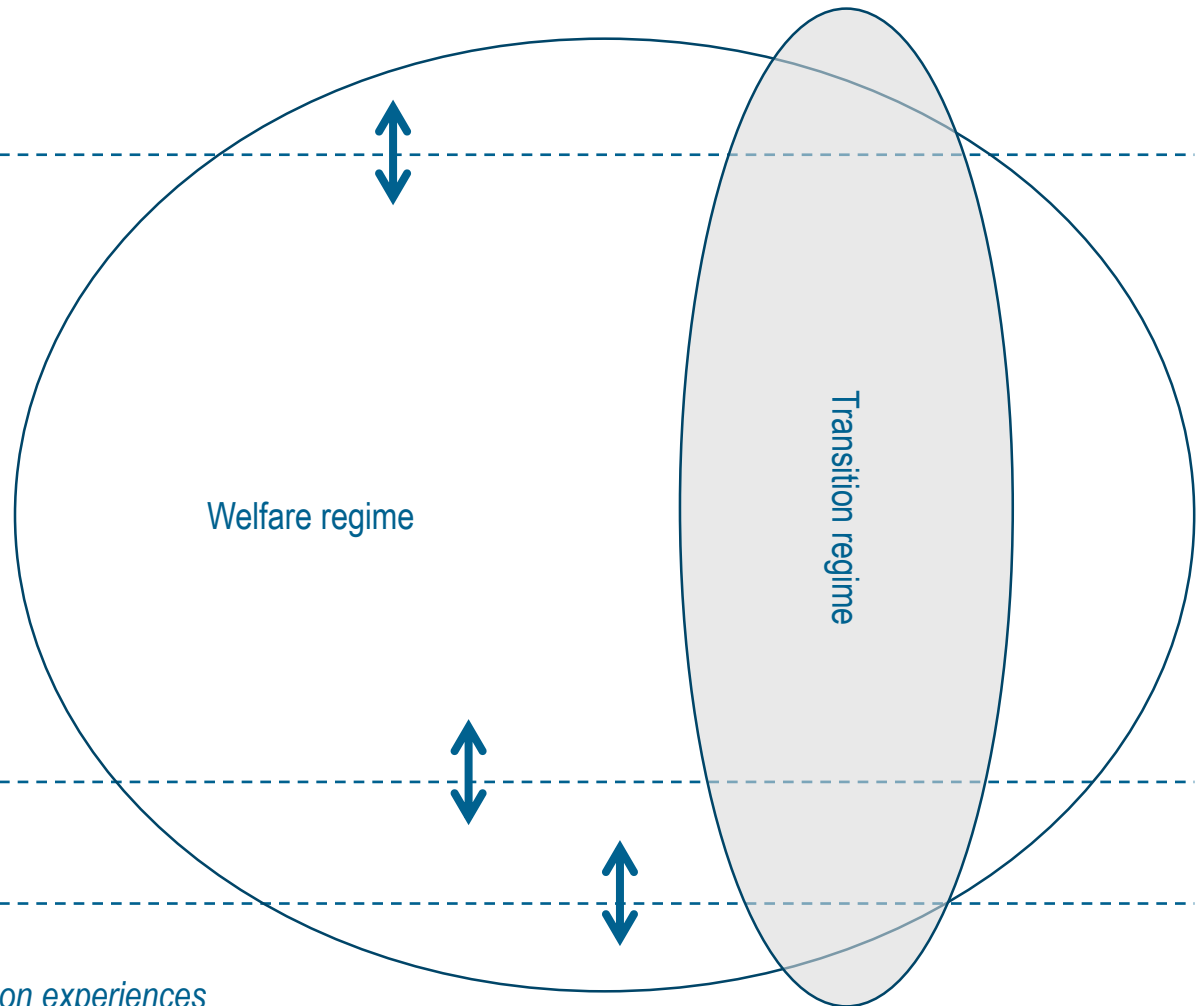
- *Social security:*  
young people's access to social security
- *Social services:*  
counselling, employment schemes,  
youth work
- *Education and training:*  
selective/comprehensive school  
vocational training:  
standardised/flexible  
school-based/company-based

## Cultural dimension

- *Individual, work, youth, disadvantage*

## Individual dimension

- *Trajectories and biographies, life plans, transition experiences*





# Regimes of youth transitions (2)

<i>Regime type</i>	<i>Social security</i>	<i>Education and Training</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Female Employment</i>	<i>Conception of „Disadvantage“</i>	<i>Focus of transition policies</i>	<i>Youth</i>
<b>Universalistic</b> <i>DK, SE, FI</i>	State	Not selective Standardised	Job	High	Individualised and structure- related	education	Personal development (citizen status)
<b>Liberal</b> <i>UK, IRL</i>	State / Family	Not selective, Low standards	Job	High	Individualised	employability	Economic independence
<b>Labour market centred</b> <i>AT, DE, FR, NL</i>	State / Familie	Selective Standardised	Vocati on	Medium	Individualised	(Pre)Vocational training	Occupational allocation
<b>Under institutionalised</b> <i>ES, GR, IT, PT</i>	Family	Not selective Low standards	Diffuse	Low	Structure-related	‘Some’ status (education or work)	Status vacuum

## Postsocialist countries?

<i>Slowenia</i>	State / Family	Not selective, Standardised	Diffuse	Medium	Structure- related?	Education	Status vacuum
<i>Romania</i>	Family	Not selective, Low standards	Diffuse	Low	Individualised and structure- related	‘Some’ status (education or work)	Status vacuum

# Different assumptions of “normality” addressing young people

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Concept of “Youth”</i>	<i>Biographical Experiences</i>
<i>DK</i>	Personal development	“It is my education, I take the decisions.” (DK)
<i>UK</i>	Economic independence	“I was afraid to come off benefits” (UK) – “You are treated like a slave” (IRL)
<i>DE</i>	Socialisation and allocation	“You get a lot of pressure. You must, must, must get an apprenticeship...” (DE)
<i>IT</i>	Status vacuum	“We are alone ... Ok, if you have some friends ... Still you have to create your job on your own” (IT)

# Disconnections: analysing change?

Young people as....	<i>Citizens</i>	<i>Human capital</i>
Policy sector	Youth policy (soft)	Labour market and education policy (hard)
Meaning of citizenship	Democratic rights and civic engagement	Being part of workforce
Aims	Citizenship, Empowerment	Employability, Adaptation
Means	Non-formal learning, shared decision-making	Pressure & control of training and job search
Motivation for activity	Intrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation

Derived from Pohl & Walther (2007)

# Further connections: Life course regimes

## Socio-economic dimension

- *Labour market, economy, inequality*

## Institutional dimension

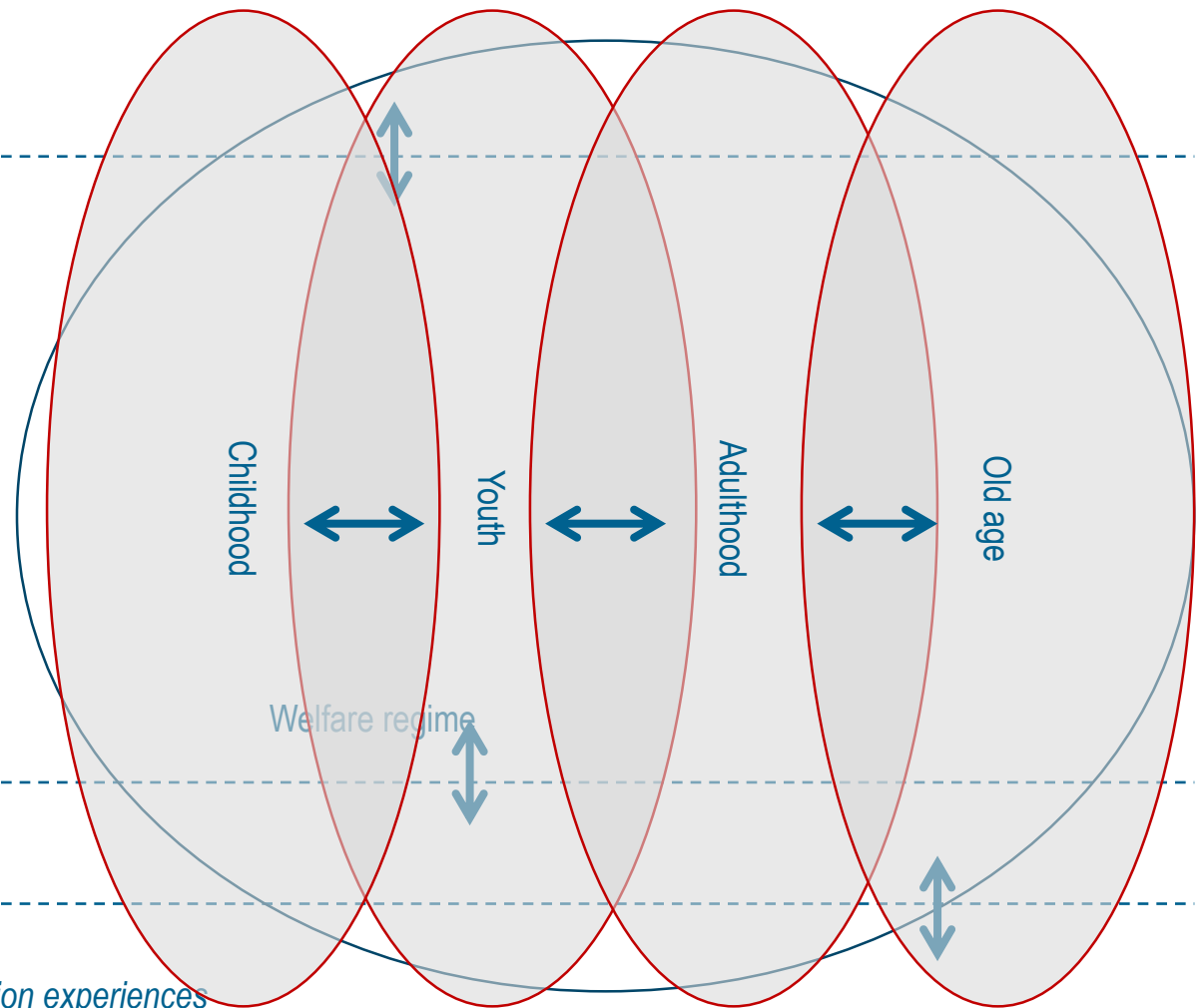
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## Cultural dimension

- *Individual, work, youth, disadvantage*

## Individual dimension

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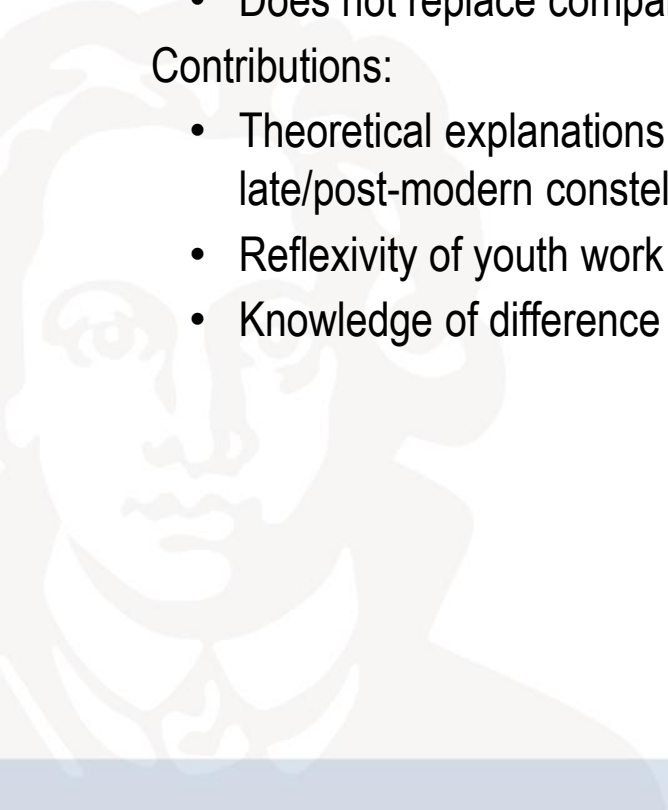
# Reconnections: the model of life course regimes as framework for social and youth work comparison

Life course regimes as (heuristic!) model for the organisation of contextual knowledge for ...

- Sampling of countries (different/similar)
- Connecting social and youth work issues to societal contexts (functions and meanings)
- Interpretation of similarities and differences
- Does not replace comparative research and analysis (!)

Contributions:

- Theoretical explanations: youth work in changing welfare states, normalisation in late/post-modern constellations etc.
- Reflexivity of youth work policy and practice
- Knowledge of difference as empirical support for critical normativity

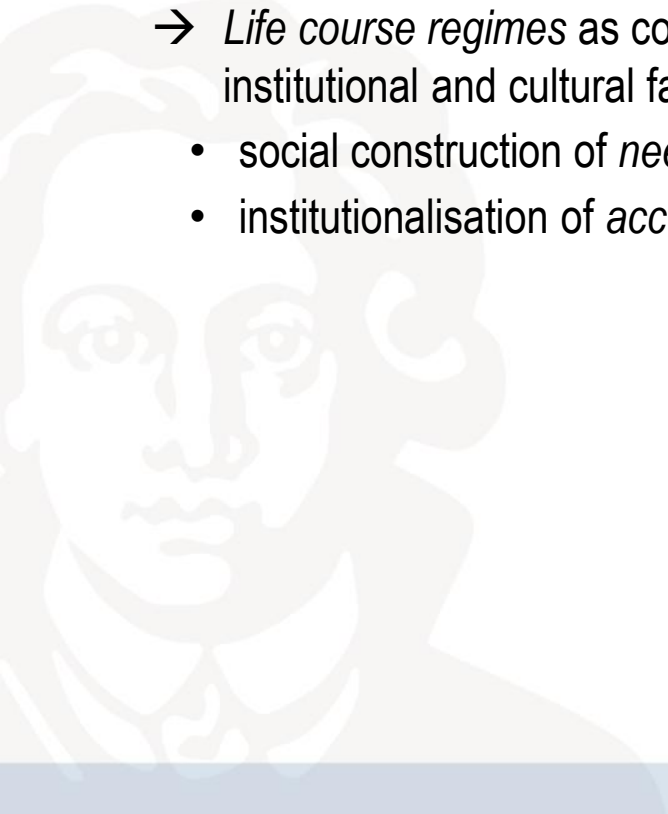


# Reconnections with conceptions of youth and social work

*Social and youth work* between supporting individuals in their biographies and “gate-keeping” in the institutionalised (“normal”) life course regime;

“secondary normalisation” in relation to contexts of “primary normalisation” – deviations are translated into needs of supports (Böhnisch 1994)

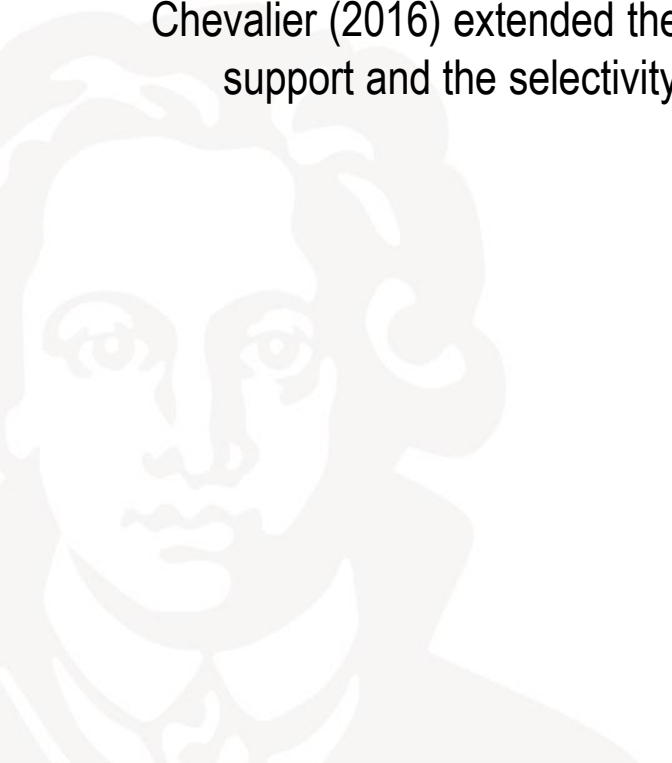
- *Life course regimes* as configurations of normality: interrelations between socio-economic, institutional and cultural factors
- social construction of *needs of support*
  - institutionalisation of *access to support*



# New connections: Transition regimes and participation/citizenship

Soler-i-Martí & Ferrer-Fons (2015) recently could show that “centrality” in regimes of youth transitions is a very important contextual predictor for explaining different forms of political participation among young people in Europe.

Chevalier (2016) extended the model to “regimes of youth welfare citizenship” using welfare support and the selectivity of education as dimensions.



## Ongoing project



# PARTISPACE

SPACES AND STYLES OF PARTICIPATION

*Spaces and Styles  
of Participation*

Formal, non-formal and informal possibilities of young people's participation in European cities



Where and how do young people participate in European cities?



Participation



Compliant



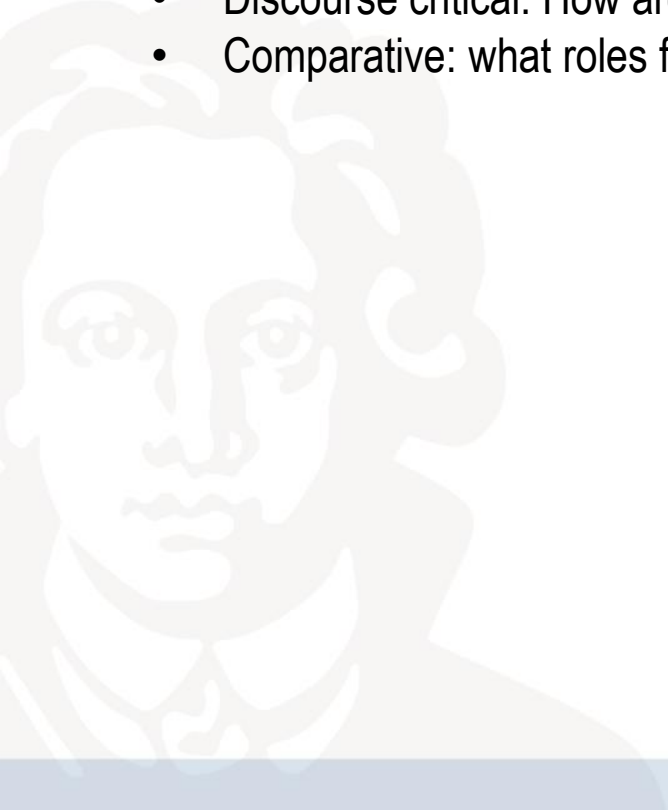
Non-compliant



Non-Participation

# Multi-perspective research design

- Ethnographical: What do young people do?
- Biographical: What does it mean to them?
- Social space: Where do they do what? What role do formal, non-formal and informal settings play?
- Discourse critical: How are they addressed? How is their self-determination framed?
- Comparative: what roles for local, national and transnational frameworks?



Summarizing...

**frames**

Regime of youth  
transitions

Institutional view:  
“normalities”

**addresses as**

Certain aspects, e.g.

- “Problem”
- Gender
- Citizenship
- “Ethnicity”
- ...

*Life worlds of young person*

# Conclusion: why “normalities” can only be discovered through comparison or “The enlargement of the universe of human discourse“ (Geertz 1973)

„Looking at the ordinary in places where it takes unaccustomed forms brings out not, as has often been claimed the arbitrariness of human behaviour (...), but the degree to which its meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed. Understanding a people’s culture exposes their normalness without reproducing their particularity ... The reason that protracted descriptions of distant sheep raids (and a really good ethnographer would have gone into what kind of sheep they were) have general relevance is that they present the sociological mind with bodied stuff to feed. The important thing about the anthropologist’s findings is their complex specificness, their circumstantiality ... The essential vocation of interpretive anthropology is not to answer our deepest questions, but to make available to us answers that others, guarding other sheep in other valleys, have given, and thus to include them in the consultable record of what man has said.“ (ibid. 14; 23; 30)

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## More info

[www.partispace.eu](http://www.partispace.eu)

## Comments welcome

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