



RESHAPING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

MANCHESTER
IN A
EUROPEAN
GAZE

EDITED BY
GRAINNE MCMAHON
HARRIET ROWLEY
JANET BATSLEER

Reshaping Youth Participation

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Reshaping Youth Participation: Manchester in a European Gaze

EDITED BY

GRÁINNE MCMAHON

University of Huddersfield, UK

HARRIET ROWLEY

Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

AND

JANET BATSLEER

Manchester Metropolitan University, UK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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About the Editors

Dr Gráinne McMahon is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Huddersfield. She teaches students on undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in the Division of Social Sciences. She was a lead Researcher on the European Commission, Horizon 2020 project PARTISPACE, and since then has co-led the EU-funded projects, COME:ON (Erasmus+) and OUYE (Erasmus+), and co-led a National Lottery Community Fund (Coronavirus Community Support Fund) project, Building Networks of Resilience. She is the Research Lead and a Trustee for RAPAR, a human rights organisation based in Manchester, UK, working with displaced people, Co-Convenor of the British Sociological Association's Gender and Feminism Study Group, and Co-founder of the feminist network, *Feminist Spaces*. She researches feminism and feminist activism, anti-racism and human rights activism, social movements, and young people's social, political, cultural, and civic participation, utilising ethnographic, co-produced, and participatory methods.

Dr Harriet Rowley is a Senior Lecturer in Education and Community at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. She teaches students on undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in the Department of Children, Youth and Education Studies. As a researcher, she uses ethnographic approaches with arts-based methods and relational practices in educational and community settings, to support individuals to voice their experiences in creative ways. She is particularly interested in youth participation, forms of social engagement through the arts and forms of democratic practice to promote the representation and recognition of marginalised groups. She has led and contributed to EU-funded projects in these areas including PARTISPACE (H2020), Partibridges (Erasmus+), and OUYE (Erasmus+). During her sabbatical in 2018, she was a Visiting Scholar at Flinders University, Adelaide (Erasmus+ Higher Education Mobility Programme). Her latest publications include a Special Issue entitled 'Critically Exploring Co-production' for *Qualitative Research Journal* and a forthcoming book with J. Batsleer and D. Lüküslü (2022) *Young People, Radical Democracy and Community Development* (Policy Press).

Janet Batsleer, Manchester Metropolitan University, is a de-institutionalising former academic who has worked in a variety of roles and published widely in the field of critical youth and community work, education and social research. She led the Manchester contribution to the PARTISPACE project, with a focus on the ethnographic case studies.

About the Contributors

Hasaan Amin is a Youth Engagement Lead for Mothers Against Violence, a community anti-violence charity and currently works for a youth-and-play charity. He joined the Young Researchers in 2017 and played an active role in keeping the group's momentum and shaping the direction of the work. He is also a student, youth engagement consultant, and part-time researcher with interests around youth, poverty, participation, citizenship, and gangs. His latest work includes the 'Citizens' Inquiry Into Youth Work in COVID-19', which examined the experience of youth providers during COVID-19, and consulting on research design for Growing Up Under COVID-19 in collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation and ECORYS.

Björn Andersson has obtained PhD in Social Work and is Associate Professor at the Department of Social Work, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Much of his research concerns the social life of young people, especially the formation of relations in urban public space and youth participation. He has written about out-reach approaches in social work and some of his latest research concerns social sustainability in urban planning.

Vanessa Attipoe has just finished an integrated degree in Social Work from the University of York. Heavily enthusiastic when it comes to the things of youth and strives to make a difference everywhere she goes.

Dr Geoff Bright is a Visiting Scholar at the Education and Social Research Institute at Manchester Metropolitan University. With an academic background in Philosophy, he has an interest in class, gender, politics, and affect in arts-based community co-production. He works in critical cultural practice as an improvising musician, experimental vocalist, and provocateur, and is particularly associated with the following projects Alchemy/Schmalchemy, Dividual Machine, and the Anti-choir Juxtavoices. In one such guise he co-curated the large-scale (50+ instruments/voices) sonic occupation of a former Rotherham steel works: Magna: Node/Flow/Mass. His latest project, Pol-Impro, is seeking to articulate a politics of improvisation.

Chris Charles, Creative Director of Creative Arena, is based in the North West of the UK and delivers projects regionally, nationally, and internationally. With over 30 years' experience, he specialises in creating person and community-centred

projects that give expression to individuals and groups that normally struggle to be heard. He combines his work as a Photographer/Film Maker/Activist and Project Manager with the ability to devise, design, fund, and manage bodies of work bringing them to a successful conclusion for all involved. His career started as a detached youth worker on the streets of his home town, Manchester, where the trust and support he was shown started him on his creative journey.

Hassan Dantata is a Co-founder & Chief Executive at Raven & Macaw and Head of Communications at the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community (Kano Hub). He was a former Manchester Youth Councillor (2016–2018) and a former member of the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority (2017–2018).

Dr James Duggan is a Research Fellow, Faculty of Health & Education, MMU. He is interested in experimenting with process and speculative approaches to re-imagine research co-production with young people and communities. He has the privilege of applying these approaches across a range of areas including youth loneliness and veterans' transitions.

Stuart Dunne, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Youth Focus North West, is a Youth Worker with 20 years' experience of working with young people in London and the North West of England in both Local Government and the Voluntary Sector. He has a particular interest in developing opportunities for young people to have their voices heard. He is the current CEO at Youth Focus North West which was originally named the North West Regional Youth Work Unit. Academically and professionally experienced in participatory research techniques with young people that are seldom listened to, he has an MA in Participatory Action Research and an MPhil in Citizenship Education.

Dr Anton Hunter, BIMM Manchester, MA Course Leader, is a Guitarist, Improviser, and Composer based in Manchester, UK. Active in the field of free improvisation and contemporary jazz. He performs regularly around the UK and Europe and has been running jazz and improvised music events in Manchester for around 20 years. He holds a PhD from Manchester Metropolitan University in 'Strategies for Composing for Large Groups of Improvising Musicians', and continues to explore this area both professionally and academically, alongside a growing interest in politics of improvisation. He is currently Course Leader of the MA in Popular Music Practice at BIMM Manchester.

Patricia Loncle is Professor of Sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique in Rennes (France) and a member of the Arènes research centre. She has been working for many years on youth policies and the sociology of youth and more recently on exiled people. Her research always includes a comparative dimension and an analysis of local realities. She is very interested in participatory research and links with youth associations.

Demet Lüküslü is Professor and Chair in Sociology at Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey. She received her PhD in Sociology from Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris, France in 2005. She has expertise in qualitative research and is particularly interested in youth studies, social movements, and sociology of everyday life and gender studies.

Dr Jessica Lütgens, is working as a Researcher and Lecturer at Goethe University of Frankfurt. She worked in the Horizon 2020 project PARTISPACE and has been publishing a study on biographies of young people who are active within the political left. Her research topics are centred around youth participation, political movements and participation, transitions, Bildung, and her perspectives are those on biographies, youth cultures, and social psychology.

Dr Yağmur Mengilli is a Lecturer at Goethe University of Frankfurt and a Researcher at RWTH University Aachen in a project on peer participation and politics. She published her study on ‘hanging out’ as youth cultural practice and worked within the PARTISPACE project. Her research topics are: youth, youth participation, youth cultures, youth work, peers, politics and dynamics, and informal styles and practices of young people.

Dr Rhetta Moran, Founding RAPAR member (2001) and initiated Status Now Network (2020). A praxivist who is most interested in the continuous process of creating equality across humanity – No Justice, No Peace.

Elaine Morrison, Post 16 Strategic Lead, Manchester City Council. Elaine has over 40 years experience of working with young people in both the public and voluntary sectors mainly in the North West Region. She is passionate about the role the arts and outdoor education can play in youth work and a real commitment to the participation of young people in the decisions that impact on their lives and the communities they live.

Berrin Osmanoğlu is a Researcher and PhD candidate in Political Science at University Paris VIII and affiliated to the Centre for Sociological and Political Research of Paris (CRESPPA). She has been working as a Lecturer at the Department of Political Science at University Bahçeşehir, Istanbul, Turkey, and at the Institute of European studies at University Paris VIII, France. She worked as a Researcher on PARTISPACE, a Horizon 2020 European project on youth participation. Her research and teaching interests include political institutions, political parties, political participation, democratisation, and nationalism.

Alexandre Pais is a Reader in Education and Social Research Institute at the Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester. He teaches and writes about all aspects of education amenable to philosophical investigation.

Barry Percy-Smith is a Professor of Childhood, Youth and Participatory Practice at the University of Huddersfield, UK. He has extensive experience as a participatory action researcher in research, evaluation, and development projects in a wide range of public sector and community contexts as well as commissions for the EC. He has an international profile for his work on child and youth participation, particularly concerning the role of dialogue and inquiry in participative processes. He has published widely on these issues including *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives From Theory and Practice* (co-edited with Nigel Patrick Thomas, Routledge 2010, currently being revised for second edition).

Ilaria Pitti is a Associate Professor at University of Bologna (Italy) and Vice-President of ISA's RC34 'Sociology of Youth'. She has conducted research on youth participation focusing primarily on unconventional forms of political engagement and subcultures. Her research relies mostly on qualitative methods, including ethnography and participatory research. She has recently published the article *Liminal Participation: Young People's Practices in the Public Sphere Between Exclusion, Claims of Belonging, and Democratic Innovation* with A. Walther and Y. Mengilli (Youth & Society, 2021) and edited the collection *Young People's Participation: Revisiting Youth and Inequalities in Europe* with M. Bruseilius-Jensen and K. Tisdall (Policy Press, 2021).

Axel Pohl is a Professor for Social Work, Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences in St. Gallen. He has been involved in a number of European research projects on transitions to adulthood and youth participation, most recently in PARTISPACE. Among his works are 'Young People and the Struggle for Participation' (co-edited with Janet Batsleer, Patricia Loncle, and Andreas Walther), 'Local Youth Policies Between National Frameworks and Local Peculiarities: Examples From Two European Cities' (*Youth and Globalization*, with Morena Cuconato) and 'Who Knows? Youth Work and the Mise-en-scene: Reframing Pedagogies of Youth Participation' (*Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, with Janet Batsleer and Nigel Patrick Thomas).

Daniel Rimes is a student at the University of Edinburgh, where he is studying Sustainable Development with Politics & International Relations (MA Hons). During his contributions to the PARTISPACE project, he volunteered with youth governance and participation institutions such as the Manchester Youth Council, Youth Focus North West, UK Youth Parliament, and the British Youth Council. Since then he has studied at the University of Edinburgh, in which he hopes to work towards a postgraduate and a career which allows him to work in the third sector. More specifically, in the field of humanitarian aid.

Nigel Patrick Thomas is a Professor Emeritus of Childhood and Youth at the University of Central Lancashire, and Founder of The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation. His research interests are principally in child welfare, children's rights, children and young people's participation, and theories

of childhood and intergenerational relations. His publications include *Children, Family and the State: Decision-making and Child Participation* (Macmillan, 2000 and Policy Press, 2002); *Children, Politics and Communication: Participation at the Margins* (Policy Press 2009); and *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives From Theory and Practice* (with Barry Percy-Smith, Routledge 2010, new edition forthcoming).

Steve Vickers is the Creative Producer for SICK! Festival, an Arts and Health organisation that enables diverse and marginalised communities locally and globally to experience their lives more positively, using art to navigate the physical, mental, and social challenges that people face. He developed his career as a Producer and Project Manager at Contact. Working on projects such as Contact Young Company and their involvement with an international collaboration project, Contacting the World. He also managed numerous collaboration commissions with Manchester Science Festival and The Stephen Lawrence Enquiry. Between 2013 and 2019 he managed The Agency in Manchester in collaboration with Battersea Arts Centre, People's Palace Projects, and Marcus Faustini.

Andreas Walther is a Professor for Educational Science, Social Pedagogy and Youth Welfare, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main (Germany). He has conducted research on transitions in the life course and youth participation. He has coordinated several EU projects, among which 'Spaces and Styles of Participation' (PARTISPACE). Recent publications include *Young People and the Struggle for Participation* (co-edited with Janet Batsleer, Patricia Loncle, and Axel Pohl) and "I Wanted to Take on a Lot of Responsibility". Reconstructing Biographies of Young People Engaged in Formal Participation' (*Journal of Youth Studies*, with Demet Lüküslü), 'Liminal Participation' (*Youth & Society*, with Ilaria Pitti and Yağmur Mengilli), and *Doing Transitions in the Life Course – Processes and Practices* (co-edited with Barbara Stauber and Richard A. Settersten, Jr).

Cemre Zekiroğlu completed her bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting Studies as well as double majored in Sociology at Yeditepe University and graduated in 2017. Then, she received her MA degree in Cultural Studies from Sabancı University where she carried out an ethnography study on youth migration in Turkey. During her studies, she was the part of various research projects on youth and urban studies. She is currently working as Business Development and Partnership Manager at Aposto, a digital media service start-up based in Istanbul, Turkey.

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Foreword

Patricia Loncle

This book is an important contribution for those who wish to understand in detail what youth participation initiatives — formal, non-formal or informal — mean and how they are implemented.

The PARTISPACE research made it possible to reveal both a certain number of characteristics common to these initiatives in the various European cities studied, and strong specificities linked to the local areas in which they took place. These specificities refer to local systems that are largely marked by several elements: nation histories; national difficulties, especially young people's living conditions; the values of national and local public policies in the broad field of social issues and in the more specific field of youth issues; and the state of the relations maintained between public and voluntary actors and with youth associations and groups.

This book offers an in-depth analysis of youth participation in Manchester, placing it in the European context of the PARTISPACE research and considering it alongside other cities studied in PARTISPACE (Gothenburg, Bologna, Frankfurt and Eskişehir). This study supported by the methodologies used in PARTISPACE — an ethnographic approach and participatory action research — the studies collected and presented here are dense and complex. The analysis is also enhanced by the mobilisation of central ideas at the crossroads of sociology and education sciences.

Overall, this book provides a detailed understanding of the local mechanisms at work in youth participation, the dynamics that run through the groups of young people who participate, and the professional and voluntary practices of the actors who accompany them. By considering specific examples of the participation of certain groups of young people (political groups, groups of young people seeking asylum, people with experience of street homelessness, feminists, artists, etc.), this book sets out the challenges encountered by the people involved in youth participation initiatives when they mobilise for their cause and local area, despite knowing that they may still experience social abjection. But, above all, the analysis demonstrates the particularly developed mobilisation capacities of these groups, their inventiveness, their solidarity, their acute understandings of their situations, and the importance of the roles they can play both in favour of the young people they represent and more widely of their local area.

For all these reasons, reading this book will undoubtedly spark debate on the richness of youth participation initiatives in Europe, and will illustrate how young people are capable of renewing repertoires of action and contributing to the various forms of solidarity needed to face major contemporary challenges such as social, political and climate injustice, poverty, and the denial of human rights.

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We would also like to thank colleagues in the Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI) at Manchester Metropolitan University, and the Just Futures Centre and Centre for Citizenship, Conflict, Identity and Diversity (CCID) at the University of Huddersfield, for their support during the PARTISPACE project and the completion of this collection.

Our friends and networks in Manchester, with whom we still work, have been there with us throughout, and we always value their support, candour, and openness. We look forward to our continued work.

Of course, we must thank the contributors to the volume for their excellent chapters, their commitment to the book, and their patience with us when we slowed down our efforts over the pandemic to allow everyone space and time. Thank you for sticking with us, and our ‘slow scholarship’.

And thank you, so much, to the young people who were part of the PARTISPACE study in Manchester and our partner cities in Europe on which the volume is based. We learned more than we could ever have known as we walked alongside you. We are still in contact, and working with, some of you, and we wish you all well for your futures.

Finally, Harriet and Gráinne would like to extend a very special thanks to Janet for her support of and friendship to them over the years – so much could not and would not have happened without your support, Janet, and we would not be the people we are today without you in our lives. Thank you.