Youth and Globalization

Call for papers

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Youth Policies in Europe
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Youth policies in Europe represent an issue quite difficult to grasp: according to countries and to territories, their target, their content and their resources appear to vary dramatically, although they have been developed more or less in all European national and infra national contexts during the last decades. Yet, few knowledge has been gathered so far to describe and analyse the evolution of these policies. This special issue will explore the recent trends that influence youth policies in Europe: the way they are framed, implemented and, possibly, assessed.

The development of youth policies in Europe can appear as the result of three concomitant processes, which take place at different levels of policy-making. Firstly, the rise of European youth policies led by the European commission and the Council of Europe, in particular since 2001 and the White paper “A new impetus for European youth”. Secondly, a kind of systematisation at the national level where we can observe the implementation of policies linked to either education and employment matters, even more so since the beginning of the crisis and the sharp increase of youth unemployment and youth poverty. Thirdly, the progress of infra national initiatives (at regional or/and local levels) in a context of growing decentralisation practices across European countries.

The agenda setting of youth policies in European countries tends to be influenced by challenges that overcome the traditional definition of youth policies (i.e. policies addressed to young people in the field of non-formal education) and that are related to welfare states or to economic considerations.
These policies also tend to follow the trends that have been observed in other fields of public policies: they imply partnerships, cofounding and negotiation processes.

Despite these common trends, the framing of youth policies appears quite different from a country to another: this is true for the public problems they intend to fight, for the governance system they adopt, for the definition of the targeted youth, for the allocated resources and for the kinds of policy instruments mobilized.

The reactions of young people and of non-formal education actors to this public delivery occur to be also miscellaneous. In many instances, associative and individual actors will use the facilities provided by public authorities. But, in many other instances, they will question the contents and the norms of this public delivery and sometimes refuse it and provide alternative organisations and answers. Hence, it is also necessary to adopt a more “bottom-up” approach to youth policies in order to fully understand the way they affect young people’s lives.

Contributions that will highlight these various dimensions and changes of youth policies will be welcomed both from a comparative or a more specific (national/regional/local) point of view.

Contributions are sought from diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds across the social sciences and humanities. Papers which report novel empirical findings, and innovate in theoretical and methodological terms, are particularly encouraged.

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