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The Circulation of Youth Policies and Adaptation of Youth Work Practices Organised by Young People at Local Level in France

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Abstract

This article is focused on two local participation initiatives in North America and Europe. The Youth Services Cooperatives, summer organizations created by teenagers in Quebec, have been adopted in France since 2013, with the support of local institutions responsible for organising youth policies in the Brittany region (France). The other initiative, youth dialogue exchanges organised by young people, was established in Italy, the United Kingdom, and France. This European scheme aimed to create new ways of thinking about cultural policies for young people at local level. Conceptually, this work is based on actor-network theory (Akrich, Callon, and Latour, 2006) and the transnationalisation of public policies (Hassenteufel, 2005) applied to youth policies (Loncle, 2011), with a view to understanding how organisations working across different countries adapt certain international initiatives between different local contexts. The research is based on fieldwork. Interviews were conducted with young people, youth workers, and decision makers in France and Quebec. In Italy and in the UK, informal discussions and interviews with decision makers were carried out, and observations were made during activities led by young people. The analysis demonstrates that the circulation of participation initiatives is strongly dependent on the original context, especially with regard to the organisation of youth policies. Some characteristics of the initiative, for example the model of community organisation, are difficult to transfer to a country where public policies are centred around public institutions. Because of the absence of international actors who would be able to facilitate links between the organizations involved in these projects, local youth workers have taken on the role of international mediators between the original project and the new initiative in the destination context. These experiences are of interest for understanding how young

people can have a fundamental role in implementing new participation initiatives, and have an impact on the definition and implementation of youth policies.

Keywords

participation – actor-network theory – circulation of public policies – youth work

Introduction

Across the world, young people are engaged in many well-known social movements, including World Youth Days, Youth for Climate, and forms of protest like that of the Occupy movement. In addition to these very visible spaces of social involvement, young people are also engaged in projects in a more local context. While these may appear to be less closely linked to global phenomena, an international dimension is sometimes visible. This article examines the global processes that are implicated in certain youth participation schemes organised at the local level, and their connection to public policies.

The analyses presented here are based on two projects implemented at the local level. The first project is the phenomenon of Youth Service Cooperatives (YSCs, known as 'coopératives jeunesse de services' in French), which have been developed in Quebec (Canada) over the course of the last thirty years. These collective initiatives are aimed at adolescents who set up a cooperative firm over the summer, offering services to the people in their communities. In 2013, several people living in Rennes (France) became interested in these systems and wished to trial them in the Brittany region. I examined the dynamics of this case of adaptation by means of a sociological study carried out as part of my doctoral thesis (Poisson, 2018). The second project is that of the SAPASS youth dialogue programme.¹ This initiative, organised by the association Keur Eskemm in Rennes, involves supporting the role of young people in cultural activities at a local level in Rennes, Manchester (UK), and Bologna (Italy). My professional involvement in these activities allowed me to have regular contact with participants and policymakers. I developed a critical reflection on this experience, more from the practical perspective of a professional than from the perspective of a researcher. I shall now draw on these practical

1 The SAPASS programme (Support for Artistic Paths in Autonomy and Social involvement) is supported by Erasmus+ funding from the European Commission aimed at organising links between young people and public policymakers.

observations, particularly with regard to the connections between the activities taking place in Rennes and Manchester, to produce a scientific comparison that will contribute to a better understanding of the transnationalisation of participatory programmes and youth policies. I have chosen to focus my analyses on two examples with which I have a great familiarity through my own professional and scientific practices. These two projects have in common that they include young participants who have little awareness of the international links that mark the systems in which they are involved. Moreover, these participatory spaces do not seek to belong to an international framework, with the result that this international element is not widely recognised in the eyes of external actors, except with regard to questions of legitimacy. The values that are embraced by the projects, whether in their original contexts or in the new contexts to which they have been transferred (such as Rennes), are very much adapted to the local environment in question. They are marked by quite widely differing conceptions of participation and involvement.

This article therefore seeks to answer the following question: how do local public projects supporting young people in their social participation adapt transnational dynamics to their own local context?

My approach is based on the concept of the transnationalisation of public action (Hassenteufel, 2005). I shall approach the two projects as two examples of transnational initiatives, whose actors have their own conceptions regarding the adaptation and comparison of their respective practices. I am therefore interested in understanding the transnational connections of projects in Rennes, in relation to projects in Quebec and the UK respectively. The starting point for these analyses is the activity of organisations working with young people in Rennes. I shall focus attention not only on public policies, but also on initiatives for public activity developed by associations, collectives, and young citizens (Thoenig, 2005). In doing so, I shall try to map out the role of the various actors with a view to their respective transnational links: associations, including their volunteers and professionals; public institutions, including their agents and elected representatives; and youth collectives with their own members. My case studies are mainly analysed using actor-network theory (Akrich, Callon, and Latour, 2006) with a focus on the systems of local organisations connected to young people (Loncle, 2011). The implications of this theory for the study of the transnationalisation of policies of local participation are explained in section 1. I shall then address the specificities of a methodology for making a transnational comparison of local projects (section 2), before discussing the results of my analyses in three steps. First, I shall describe the transnationalisation of local activities that takes place through the sharing of experiences and the mobilisation of collaborative schemes (section 3). I shall

then explain the strong local dimension of these projects, which is the result of a process of transnational intermediation carried out by local professionals (section 4). In the final part of my analysis, I study the models of participation found in these transnational dynamics, ranging from, on the one hand, models of support for youth initiatives, to, on the other hand, models that favour community action (section 5).

Conceptualising Local Public Action for Young People from a Transnational Perspective

I principally rely on actor-network theory for my analysis at the local level. This involves understanding the creation of shared meanings between different protagonists, which allows me to follow the associations between actors in order to understand their links and the networks they constitute. This process provides an opportunity to focus on the links between organisations and the values embedded in their interventions, their 'structures of meaning' (Muller, 2000). The use of a sociological method based on actor-network theory allows me to focus on the observation of associations and processes of translation, in the sense of the reformulation of certain ideas. Although this approach provides the framework for my reflections, I sometimes depart from it in order to integrate elements that are more related to transnational processes.

I therefore adopt certain concepts concerning the circulation and transfer of public policies (Delpuch, 2009). These approaches are particularly well adapted for addressing the dissemination of ideas and practices, often starting from the original contexts of the transferred initiatives. I am particularly interested in local systems that draw inspiration from transnational practices. However, existing works on the circulation of policy allow me to identify elements to be analysed, such as the channels through which the diffusion of initiatives occurs, the choice of models, the dynamics of transformation, the contribution made by imported ideas on public actions in the context to which initiatives are transferred (Delpuch, 2009), and especially the unexpected effects that may arise (Hassenteufel and De Maillard, 2013). The role of constraints in the circulation of policies can also be considered (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). Besides the concepts of transfer and circulation, I shall also use the concept of convergence. The latter concept is sometimes more pertinent to my case studies, since, as I demonstrate, although some elements may be transferred in a rather mechanical way, the interest lies in the convergences or lack of convergences between the initiatives in the context of origin and the

destination context respectively. The convergences may then be total, partial, or limited in their various criteria.

Insofar as the central issues of the projects are situated at the local level, I also rely on the expertise that has been developed with regard to youth policies (Loncle, 2011), including the role of elected representatives, experts, technicians, associations, professionals, and young people. These policies have been studied in comparative terms, particularly at European level (Wallance and Bendit, 2009). Youth participation has also been studied from comparative perspectives at European level (Loncle et al, 2012; Walther et al, 2019). However, very little has been written so far on the transfer of participatory programmes involving young people by actors in youth work. The circulation of youth policies is relatively little studied, except in terms of Europeanisation (Talleu, 2013). There is, however, work on the action of non-state actors in these processes (Ladi, 2000; Stone, 2001). For example, there is a greater quantity of work on movements of citizen activism (Siméant-Germanos, 2010). There is also work on international circulation with regard to democratic issues, for example, concerning the participatory budgets originally developed in South America and then in Europe (Porto de Oliveira, 2016).

Comparison of Two Transnational Approaches

As I stated in the introduction, the present article is based on two scientific approaches with two distinct temporalities. The first concerns the transfer of YSCs from Quebec to Brittany, and in this case the focus is on the experimental application in France of practices that already existed in Quebec. The second approach concerns the local association Keur Eskemm (France) and the SAPASS programme, and here the focus is on exchanges taking place between groups of young people in different countries, with the aim of strengthening those groups. In the first case, that of the YSCs, there is an explicit desire to transfer an activity from one context to another, whereas in the second case the process is more about sharing ideas. However, in practice, the second case also provides examples of actions being set up in common between the different contexts. The two cases both involve the establishment of transnational practices.

In terms of methodology, I therefore base my study on a comparison of two transnational projects, which are approached through the local situation in Rennes. As the first stage of my work, in 2018, was a transnational study of YSCs, I compare the functioning of SAPASS to that of YSCs. There is a potential

for comparisons in both directions between these two elements, but the starting point for the analysis is the study of YSC s.

With regard to data collection methods, for the work on YSC s I spoke to 20 people, key players in this project. I conducted 8 interviews with organisers of local YSC groups in Montreal, accompanied by observations and the study of relevant documents, in order to understand the original context of the project. In Rennes, I met with 9 people to discuss their role in the transfer of the YSC project from Quebec to Brittany. A further 3 people also granted me an interview to talk in greater depth about the political context for the development of these YSC s.

My approach was quite different in the case of Keur Eskemm and SAPASS. Building on my academic work on the transnational dynamics of YSC s, I reflected on the associative practices of Keur Eskemm at the European level. This seemed to me to be a productive line of inquiry, and led me to undertake the present article. Between 2018 and 2020 I took part in 5 meetings of young people organised in the framework of SAPASS, and in this way I was able to work practically in the sharing and construction of transnational programmes. I met on several occasions with an elected representative from Manchester and had informal conversations with several elected representatives from Rennes about this project. The presence of an academic from Manchester within the activities of SAPASS facilitated reflection on this subject, and our conversations and the notes that we took respectively helped us to construct our analysis of the project. In both cases, I use data from meetings with organisers of participatory schemes and institutional leaders.

The Transnationalisation of Local Actions: the Sharing of Experiences and Systems of Cooperation

One of the first elements of analysis concerns the context of the processes of transnationalisation. Policies affecting young people involve intervention at different levels of decision making, including that of the European Union. Organised exchanges between actors thereby enable the dissemination of ideas and the organisation of cooperation (Talleu, 2013). This can be observed at the European level but also at the international level.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the both cases involve a transfer between different contexts. In the case of YSC s, these were created in Quebec by a national network of actors and are organised locally, at the community level. In Montreal, where I have studied different cases, YSC s are generally set up at the level of a neighbourhood. When residents of Rennes decided to

create YSC s in their own territories, the initial model was adopted based on the information communicated to them by participants from Quebec. I was able to explain, in the context of my thesis, that the first Rennes YSC s were more like direct implementations of the Quebec YSC s rather than being local French initiatives. The pedagogy had been duplicated in France in almost identical terms to those used in two projects in Quebec. The professionals involved in the first Rennes YSC were trained by Quebec trainers, and the institutional model that was set up for this programme was exactly the same: a youth work organisation aimed at facilitating youth work with young people and an economic actor to help develop a business model.

In the case of Keur Eskemm's transnational programme, the situation is very different. *SAPASS* is one activity among others. Young people who participate in it do so through European exchange schemes involving participants from the UK and Italy. The biggest youth exchange took place in June 2019 in Rennes and the experience has since continued with regular activities in different countries. In this process, there is no aim to duplicate earlier schemes, but the link with the UK shows that ideas are transferred fairly regularly. In Rennes, young people involved in Keur Eskemm are members of the association and participate fully in its organisation. They have previously participated in other cultural and civic activities. In Manchester, the group of young people involved at the grassroots level in *SAPASS* is organised by an association aimed at young people in the city. Another association that supports refugees also gradually became involved. Finally, young people supported by the first association decided to create a collective called Remodel Manchester, on the model of the collective set up by Keur Eskemm. Certain practices from Manchester have also inspired practices in Rennes: those of participatory action research with refugees. Some members of Keur Eskemm, in association with another local association working with young refugees, created a participatory action research scheme with them.

Beyond these different contexts, two common elements should be noted in the process of transnationalisation.

First, the transfer of YSC s and the cultural actions of *SAPASS* emerge within frameworks for the mobilisation and dissemination of knowledge. In the case of YSC s, the story starts at the 2011 Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) in Montreal (Rospabé, 2017). This event aimed to share practices relating to social economy. The managers of the Quebec YSC programme were present. Breton delegates at this event took an interest in the YSC programme, which led to a first meeting. Indeed, the Breton delegation included a variety of actors from the social and solidarity economy in Brittany, including the head of the social and solidarity economy cluster in Rennes, the head of a cooperative,

a professional from the Brittany Chamber of Social Economy, and academics. The trip taken by this delegation seems to have created a sort of grouping between people working in different environments, whose various structures would subsequently be mobilised in order to set up YSCs. This delegation, which became an actor, played a key role in the transfer. More precisely, it was composed of a group of people from Rennes who wished to implement the programme in Brittany and three people from Quebec whom they met during the GSEF. The five people from Rennes knew each other through their shared experiences, and this was also the case for the people from Quebec. This grouping of eight people therefore constituted an intermediary space that allowed for the initiative to be developed through a transnational, operational dynamic. The creation of this programme by the delegation from Rennes also had an effect on their own subsequent trajectories, and some of them would go on to play a role in the YSC system that was implemented in Brittany later on.

From 2012 onwards, more formal links between actors in Brittany and Quebec were established when delegates from Rennes decided to create a trial with a view to establishing the first YSCs in Brittany in the summer of 2013. At this point, a first stage of translation took place. The knowledge concerning YSCs developed in Quebec, and explained during the GSEF, was gradually adapted for the implementation of a programme in Brittany.

In the case of SAPASS, the links between associations began to develop starting from the Partispace research project.² A central event taking place in Paris in April 2018 was the opportunity for a first meeting between the heads of the associations. These participants subsequently met again in Rennes in November 2018, and several times per year from that point onwards. In this context, the processes of translation and transnationalisation of practices were different from in the case of YSCs. The initiative came from the association Keur Eskemm, and in particular from its coordinator. As mentioned above, partnerships with youth associations in Bologna and Manchester were formed on the basis of surveys drawn up by Partispace researchers. Overall, there were two youth workers and a key researcher in Manchester, two key professionals in Bologna, and two professionals and a key researcher in Rennes. In the process of setting up the network, the researchers gradually came to play a smaller role, and in the end, there were six workers (two in each city) constituting the intermediary actor. As one of the objectives of the SAPASS system is to support youth participation, young people also gradually took on a determining role. The intermediary actor was therefore composed both of professionals, whose

² Partispace.eu is a Horizon 2020 research project on youth participation in Europe.

number changed as the system became established, and of several young people, particularly in Manchester.

It was initially local professionals in youth work who were invited to participate in a research event, and who in fact met each other there. These different associations were already interested in other European practices for several reasons: because academics had already studied these European practices, because these practices could be related to activities already in place at the local level, and because funding opportunities exist to facilitate these exchanges. At this stage, from the perspective of the local level in Rennes, this first event in which a professional from an association participated essentially marked the start of an exchange, without directly establishing a shared project. Nonetheless, a few months later, with the help of European funding, the heads of associations in Manchester and Bologna travelled to a meeting in Rennes and a system of cooperation was established.

In both cases, the role of spaces for the dissemination of knowledge about projects involving young people is notable. The challenge therefore lies in studying the appropriation of knowledge for associative practices at the local level. Concerning YSCs, this process was quite direct, as it was a matter of adapting the YSC system to apply it in France. This is not necessarily obvious, however, because there is no extensive political cooperation between French institutions and actors in Quebec. In the case of SAPASS, studying the appropriation of knowledge involves an examination of a framework of cooperation that exists by means of Erasmus+ exchange programmes. Finally, the Rennes SAPASS association, through its relations with other associative practices, notably those in Manchester, situates these practices in another system of political values. The projects taking place in Rennes served as a source of inspiration for the establishment of a collective in Rennes. A collective involved in the SAPASS programme in Manchester was also a source of inspiration for setting up a research project on the subject of the situations of young refugees.

The role of academics should be emphasised in both projects. In the case of the transfer of the YSC project from Quebec to Brittany, the first Breton delegation to the 2011 forum included an academic from the economics faculty of the University of Rennes 1. The Breton project soon gave rise to several academic works. The academic interest in this project, and the critical distance that it made possible, contributed to its legitimisation. In the case of SAPASS, the link with academics is very direct. The first comparisons between participatory schemes in Manchester and Rennes respectively were made in the context of the Partispace research project. Subsequently, an academic from a political science department remained involved in the scheme, as a participant contributing important resources. Her role did not involve directly studying the scheme,

but rather contributing to it, unlike the academics involved in YSCs. In both cases, it is evident that the fundamentally international character of university practices supports the transnationalisation of local practices. This element is to be noted because these are scientific works carried out in an international framework, but with civil society actors who are not necessarily active, at least initially, in work with an international outlook.

According to my analysis, there are therefore four central actors in the translation process: young people, as an object of interest rather than as active participants, youth workers, academics, and knowledge-sharing events. It should be noted that institutions do not have a direct role in the transfer process but one institution in particular supports it: the European Commission, both through its support for research, and through the Erasmus+ programme.

In order to produce a synthesis of the processes of transnationalisation of the two projects, I propose to make use of the work of Wolman and Page (2002). They distinguish four types of actors involved in policy transfer: producers (those who are imitated), senders (those involved in dissemination and transplanting practices), facilitators (those who support the reception of the transfers), and recipients (those who implement practices in the destination context). For YSCs, the producers are the creators of the original practices in Quebec and the senders responsible for transplanting those practices are the actors involved in coordinating events in Quebec and the founders of the project in Rennes. The organiser of the first YSC in Rennes is clearly a sender insofar as she is involved throughout the year in the preparation of the project. The continuous presence of the organiser is peculiar to the first YSC in Rennes, but it explains the actual implementation of the summer programme. At first glance, it might seem that the organisers could belong to the role of recipients, as people who apply the YSC method in practice. This is indeed the case, but they share this role with the group of founders who are also actively involved in the development of the project. In the case of SAPASS, the producers are local associative practices, the senders are the professionals, who also act as facilitators and, in my opinion, share this role with academics, and the recipients are young people and youth workers.

The Transnational Intermediation of Local Youth Workers Encouraged by Public Policies

The role of local professionals is, in my view, the second fundamental element to clarify. The professionals who initially took an interest in the dynamics of the two projects in Rennes have different roles in their work in the local area.

In the case of YSCs, they are professionals who support the development of activities in the social economy. For SAPASS, they are young people working in sociocultural activities. In both cases, the development of international links was very dependent on the will of these actors. I explained in the previous section the role of spaces for the sharing of knowledge. These local professionals in Rennes are the actors who took part in events run by organisations, leading to the transnationalisation of the practices of these organisations. Once links were established with organisations in Quebec in the first case and in the United Kingdom in the second case, the work was carried out almost exclusively by professionals in Rennes, in collaboration with those of the partner organisations.

In this process, it is striking that there is an absence of operational support for disseminating the practices of an organisation active in a foreign country to the local environment. There are, in fact, no forms of youth policy diplomacy that would be capable of facilitating cooperation between civil society initiatives in different countries. Whereas entrepreneurs who want to develop an activity abroad enjoy the support of consular chambers of commerce, and cultural actors who build international partnerships are assisted by the cultural advisors of the consulates, the organisers of the youth initiatives studied here seem to act outside these networks. For example, on the occasion of an event organised in Brussels with the Rennes SAPASS group, the organisers asked the *Maison de la Bretagne*, an institution within the *Conseil Régional de Bretagne* (Regional Council of Brittany) present in Brussels, to welcome young participants. The staff of the *Maison de la Bretagne* made a short presentation, but without any mention of the issues relating to youth at the European level. I gathered from subsequent informal conversations that the lack of content on this subject was essentially due to the fact that the *Maison de la Bretagne* does not have a specific expertise on youth policies, which is perhaps unsurprising given that these public policies are generally limited in scope. At another period of the project, during a local meeting in Rennes, I also initiated a meeting between an official from Rennes concerned with associative and youth policies and an elected official in charge of educational issues in Manchester. Although this sort of meeting could arise from our initiative, it did not necessarily create a more lasting link. In this case, the links between officials who deal with youth issues, even when they are instigated through an associative initiative, seem difficult to build at the transnational level.

Even if institutions were not active in the transfer of these initiatives, they still had a role in facilitating both of the programmes. As far as the YSCs are concerned, the *Conseil Régional de Bretagne* supported the first schemes in the region and the various local authorities (town halls, departmental councils)

and the central state also supported the process. A variety of public policies were mobilised: support for the social and solidarity economy, as well as youth and urban policy. It is clear that the specific context of Rennes and Brittany played an active role in the reception of the YSC system. In the case of SAPASS, the relationship with institutions was different because there is financial support available for sharing ideas within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. However, at the level of actions implemented locally, the city of Rennes strongly supports Keur Eskemm, and also played a role in receiving ideas arising from practices in Manchester.

Finally, as far as YSCs are concerned, the organisers involved in the first trial of this initiative in Rennes were deeply involved in adapting the model. They were trained by the organisers of the initiative in Quebec, used documentation from Quebec, and also made use of teaching materials from the Quebec initiative. A sort of transnational group was thereby formed between inhabitants of Quebec and Rennes, which constituted the organisers and founders of the trial in 2013. The importance of this initial group gradually diminished, and several years later it left in its place a network of actors organised on the national level in France.

In the case of SAPASS the dynamic was somewhat different, as the transnational group was composed of professionals from Rennes, the UK, and Italy. The links between the coordinator of the association in Rennes and a youth worker in Manchester greatly facilitated the process. A shared framework was developed from 2018 onwards, notably through the joint preparation of documents to obtain funding for collaborative work. From this point, the dynamic of the transnational group continued, without undertaking any trials for applying the existing practices of the project at the national level. The process of translation took place in a rather dispersed way. Youth workers in Rennes gradually developed a role as transnational actors, by developing activities aimed at supporting other European organisations. This work, which was initially centred on the dynamics of the project in Rennes, thereby became gradually more international in outlook.

The use of the written word played a different role in the two cases. In the case of YSCs, the aim was to make use of documents written in Quebec in order to draw inspiration for practices to be developed in Rennes. For SAPASS, professionals in Rennes created a shared framework for cooperation, with material drafted jointly with the associations in the UK and Italy. In both cases, the written word was a factor in facilitating the translatability of initiatives. For example, the pedagogical methods of YSCs are explained in documentation from the Quebec context, which facilitated their adoption in Rennes. The experiences of associations involved in SAPASS were also recorded in the

documentation of the partnership, which supported the dissemination of ideas. A website relating the experiences of the associations involved in the partnership and their joint work in the course of transnational activities, also capitalised on this shared documentation.

The organisers involved in the two projects work in similar environments. We can identify three types of actors involved at the local level: youth collectives, associations supporting the projects, and professionals. When we consider the links with political actors who support the projects being developed, it becomes clear that these remain rather distant from the projects. The actions of political institutions in this respect seem to belong to a model of delegation, whereby they provide financial support but are not involved directly.

On the transnational level, the principal actors involved are the associations involved in organising the projects, professionals, and academics. Young people and political policymakers were relatively absent from the development of transnational links. With regard to *SAPASS*, the involvement of young people on a transnational level largely took place in the context of the framework for cooperation that was gradually created.

The intermediary role played by professionals emerged in addition to their more traditional role in providing support.

Models of Participation, from Support for Youth Initiatives to Community Action

The last element to address in the comparison of the two transnational actions in question concerns models for participatory schemes. This concept has gradually become established in youth policies in Europe. It can take on quite varied forms. In the case of the transnational actions in which organisations in Rennes are involved, it seems that, as a legacy of actions developed with young people, the idea of a 'youth initiative' constitutes the main principle of intervention. The challenge is then for public action to be organised with the goal of supporting ideas built by young people themselves. This element was visible in the creation of a multitude of grants for youth initiatives, particularly following the creation by the state of the *Défi Jeunes* (Challenge Youth) programme (Rizet, 2010). In Rennes, a fund to support young people initiative still exists, but concepts of participation are not limited to the provision of financial support for youth to draw upon when prompted to do so by institutions.

In the two projects studied, the idea of community action is strongly present. In the dissemination of *YSCs*, the term 'community action' (Bourque and Comeau, 2007) was used very explicitly by actors in Quebec, and adopted by

the founders of the initiative in Rennes. The latter often refer to this when expressing the few difficulties that they experienced in adapting the project to their own local context. In the case of SAPASS, the term 'community' is also constantly used in relation to the sharing of practices for the social participation of young people, particularly those from working class neighbourhoods involved in the association in Manchester. This sometimes created difficulties of understanding, but it also prompted actors in Rennes to question their relationship with their immediate environment. The element that these approaches have in common is the mobilisation of young people who do not know each other beforehand. The challenge is then to support groups of young people, who will go on to develop actions for their own group, and who will gradually come into contact with public action, through interactions with associations and public policymakers.

The two transnational projects in Rennes emerged in a context where the 'territorialisation' of municipal action with young people was evolving. For example, the *Centre Régional d'Information Jeunesse* (Regional Youth Information Centre), which is responsible for municipal policy, established organisers dedicated to specific local districts, whereas previously all professionals had been engaged in developing policies for the city without reference to specific neighbourhoods. This focus on the local context lends itself to developing practices with stronger community links. The term 'community' used in Quebec, in the sense of 'for' the community, 'by' the community, and 'with' the community, is perhaps understood in a more limited sense in Rennes. Here, the aim is to support young people in their involvement within their environments, but the role of other actors is not always thought through. For example, whereas the organisers of YSCs in Montreal seem to play a real role as professionals in the community sector, youth workers in Rennes tend to adopt practices associated with the social and solidarity economy.

One of the unique features of these initiatives in Rennes is this principle of support, or 'accompagnement', for participatory programmes. The network of actors is relatively professionalised, and indeed it appears that most of the people working with young people within the framework of these projects are professionals. This goes hand in hand with several other elements. The role of accompaniment is clearly more positively assumed here than it is in the foreign contexts with which the actors interact. The voluntary status of some young people involved in the projects in foreign contexts is not present to a significant extent in the initiatives in Rennes, with the result that the projects tend not to create an environment in which peers can play a major role. The pedagogical principle of accompaniment involved in YSCs in Quebec was

easily adopted by the French organisers, since they operate in a professional environment in which this sort of training already exists.

As for the political dimension of participatory schemes, the roles of elected representatives in Rennes and Manchester respectively are particularly interesting. In Rennes, it seems that the transnational dimension of SAPASS gives a form of political legitimacy to the action of the local association. However, elected representatives generally take only a limited interest, despite repeated invitations for their involvement. Within the team based in Manchester, however, a young elected representative who is responsible for educational issues at Manchester City Council is particularly heavily involved. His attitude is totally different from that of elected representatives in Rennes, as he is more fully integrated in the group of participants. During an event in Rennes in June 2019, he attended a week-long exchange and contributed indirectly to discussions.

As the Erasmus+ programme, within which SAPASS is embedded, aims to support links between policymakers and young people,³ it is also important to understand how it influences the relationship between young people and public policies at the local level. As mentioned above, the idea of participation is relevant both to the YSCs and to SAPASS. The specificity of SAPASS is that the political dimension of youth mobilisation is central. Indeed, Keur Eskemm has embedded its work in the framework of the 'Youth Dialogue' initiative of the Erasmus+ programme, in particular because of its interest in addressing the role of young people in public policies. In this respect, Keur Eskemm's appropriation of this framework is essentially aimed at developing the creation of political ideas by young people and experimenting with artistic and creative actions that make sense politically at their own level. Direct dialogue with policymakers is therefore only of secondary importance. The hypothesis is that, by recognising the political character of young people's cultural activities, Keur Eskemm can strengthen its political expertise and thus improve the wider recognition of these actions in public policies. This is therefore a particular perspective that may differ somewhat from the stated objectives of youth dialogue, which could simply be a matter of organising meetings between young people

3 The stated objectives of youth dialogue in Erasmus+ are as follows: 'This Action promotes the active participation of young people in democratic life and fosters debate around topics centred on the themes and priorities set under the EU Youth Strategy, in particular with regards to the Youth Goals, and its dialogue mechanisms. Dialogue mechanisms are structured around priorities and timing and foresee events where young people discuss the agreed themes among themselves and with policy-makers, youth experts and representatives of public authorities in charge of youth in order to obtain results which are useful for policy-making.' Website: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-b/three-key-actions/key-action-3/youth-dialogue_en.

and elected representatives. Finally, it should also be specified that this work on public policies is essentially developed at the local level, whether in Rennes or Manchester. At the European level, the Erasmus+ framework is mainly used initially to exchange ideas as part of this cooperation scheme. That said, owing to the willingness of partners in Rennes and Manchester to extend the activities that had been started, they subsequently developed another European system with organisations involving young people in Italy, Romania, Belgium, and Latvia, where joint political initiatives are further developed at European level.⁴

Conclusion

I would first like to reflect on the following question: how do local public action supporting young people in their social participation adapt transnational dynamics to their own local context? Actor-network theory makes it possible to understand the way in which certain local practices are related to networks of knowledge-sharing and European cooperation. These networks played a role in activating transnational dynamics in both cases studied here. They also had a determining effect on their nature: in the case of YSCs, this led to an initial process of experimentation owing to the absence of possible frameworks for cooperation and a lack of available actors, and in the case of SAPASS it led to an initial process of exchange in a framework of cooperation, which subsequently made it possible to develop shared transnational actions. Academics have an important role to play in the circulation of ideas and can therefore serve as actors bringing a certain local legitimacy to the projects being undertaken.

The transnational dynamics of local public actions are also related to the work of youth workers. In this case, they have a role as intermediaries between different contexts, that of their own local environment and the contexts of their partners. They therefore act in a transnational field of action, which invites us to rethink their roles in the circulation of different models of participation present in these frameworks. The transnational dynamics of the two projects also seem to be facilitated by certain convergences between the framework for action in the context of Rennes and in foreign contexts: the presence of a support association, professionals, and a group of young people. In these cases,

4 The organisations involved in this new system, entitled 'COME:ON', arrange, among other things, the temporary occupation of a former university in Belgium, in order to create transnational cultural initiatives rooted in a given territory.

the role of public policymakers is then to support these dynamics rather than to contribute directly to them.

With regard to models of participation, there are significant differences in conception: the application of YSCs in Quebec involved a communitarian concept of participation, which was transferred with some difficulty to the initiative in France, whereas the application of the SAPASS project in Manchester and Rennes involved contrasting concepts of community organisation and support for youth initiatives respectively. This dimension is interesting because it helps to explain how political values can evolve in response to transnational associative projects.

To conclude, it is useful to characterise and situate the two projects studied here in a wider perspective. The terms 'translation', 'hybridisation', and 'divergent convergence' used by Hassenteufel and De Maillard (2013) are enlightening in this respect. The concept of 'divergent convergence' (used first by Levi-Faur and Jordana, 2005, then taken up by Hassenteufel and De Maillard) accounts for the complexity of translation operations, especially as they are understood by the founders of actor-network theory. Overall, the YSC and SAPASS projects can be characterised as 'convergent-divergent'. The points of convergence for the YSCs are the overall framework, the central role of facilitators, and their inclusion in a system of public policies (which are different in Rennes compared to Montreal and Quebec). The main element of divergence is the paradigm of community organisation, which is largely absent in France. Other distinctions that gradually appeared in the initiative could be explained, such as the legal organisation of the cooperatives managed by young people, the local actors who support them, and those who provide them with a legal framework for work by means of an employment contract.

SAPASS, too, is a transnational initiative involving both convergences and divergences. Insofar as the whole SAPASS framework is based on a transnational European dynamic and not on a transnational transfer operation with a sending and a receiving party, the conceptual framework is different. To understand the convergences and divergences, it is essential to use a long-term perspective. The main convergence is connected to the very constitution of the SAPASS system: it is created by convergent organisations, made up of young people and professionals with links to research. In the development of activities, convergences are found in joint artistic actions and in the links to public youth and cultural policies. The main divergence lies in the way the different actors in Rennes and Manchester are organised. In Rennes, the experience of the project in Manchester notably helped to strengthen the interest of several members of the association in participatory research approaches. In Manchester, SAPASS provided an opportunity to mobilise a new group of

young people, which was created alongside the project. The developments that took place in the two environments, in Rennes and Manchester, were therefore quite different over the course of the SAPASS project.

Some avenues remain to be explored concerning the transnational development of participatory practices in youth policies at the local level. For example, it would be relevant to compare local actions linked to transnational processes with local initiatives that developed only at this local scale. It would also be useful to conduct international comparisons of transnational phenomena.

It would then be a matter of making connections between local studies of initiatives with a transnational dimension, for example by making connections between studies that would take Manchester and Montreal as their starting points respectively.

Indeed, using comparisons of only local cases, in order to understand their transnational character, does not necessarily make it possible to describe the full complexity of the transfer processes. In other words, in our comparison of the transnational phenomenon of the YSCs, based on the initiatives in Quebec and France, with the transnational phenomenon of SAPASS, based on the projects taking place in Rennes and Manchester, we could have examined some other elements. However, the reasoning presented here has made it possible to look in more detail at the question of the local character of transnational initiatives. Finally, it would also be useful to study the role of researchers in the circulation of policies for the participation of young people, and their relation to actors in civil society. Although the question was addressed to some extent here, a closer analysis of the legitimacy that can be conferred by the involvement of university researchers, the way they construct knowledge, and how that knowledge is disseminated, including their influence on policymakers, would be valuable.

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