

## Description of the scientific content

It was a major challenge for the participating scientists to find an appropriate topic approach due to the fact that the area of youth quotas is completely unresearched so far. However, during the symposium this circumstance proved to be advantageous because the different approaches and priorities illustrated the manifold aspects of youth quotas.

**Prof. Dr. Dieter Birnbacher** opened the symposium with his presentation. He focused on youth quotas in parliaments. Prof. Birnbacher is of the opinion that youth quotas within parliaments are insufficient to incorporate and represent the interests of young people. He doubts that young representatives (representatives of the young generation) would thoroughly represent the interests of their age group, which is the strongest argument in favour of youth quotas. Prof. Birnbacher advocated, rather, a larger package of measures. As a first step the voting age should be lowered; furthermore, parents should get a proxy vote for their children. According to Birnbacher, a parental proxy vote would enable parents to represent the interests of their children. In the following discussion, the assumption that young representatives of the young generation do not necessarily represent the interest of their generation was affirmed, but at the same time it was questioned that parents would use their additional voice to vote in the interests of their children. Some participants stated that the proxy vote would strengthen rather the parents and not the children and the youth. Nevertheless, a lowering of the voting age was considered necessary by all participants of the workshop.

**Dr. Alexander Bagattini** introduced the term "ageism" into the discussion. The term defines the unequal treatment of people because of their age (age discrimination). In a first step, he compared "ageism" with other negatively-charged "isms", such as sexism and racism. Alexander Bagattini is of the opinion that "ageism" carries a similarly negative connotation and thus should be rejected. From his point of view "Youth Quotas" have to be classified as ageism because a certain population group will be privileged (in this case young people). This should be rejected in our liberal-democratic society. Furthermore, he thinks that a lowering of the voting age is not necessary. In the following discussion, doubts were raised that the introduction of youth quotas or the lowering of the voting age – which privileges young people at the cost of older population groups – is "ageism". It was suggested, rather, that these measures reduce the existing inequalities between young and old society members.

In his presentation, **Prof. Dr. Dr. Jörg Tremmel** discussed the history of democracy and the extension of the suffrage. He focused on the exclusion of minors from elections. Tremmel argued that the inclusion of more and more previously excluded groups (women, dependent people, people aged 25–18 years) has made it possible that nearly all societal groups are allowed to vote nowadays. But there is one big exception: minors are still not allowed to vote. This is the last big group in society that is excluded. According to Tremmel, the main argument for the exclusion of the minors is their alleged "lack of maturity" or the "lack of political judgment". Tremmel argued that this is epistocratic and contradicts the normative foundations of democratic theory. To overcome this deficiency, he suggests a "right to vote by registration". Every person should be allowed to vote. Minors, who are interested in voting, should first register as official voters. An age limit is thus replaced by an expression of will. This model does not mean that there is a voting age of 0 years.

In her presentation, **Anja Karnein PhD**, focused on the thesis that today's young people, who will be more affected by climate change, have a greater interest in curbing the potential impact of climate change. The assumption is that an increased participation of young people

in politics, guaranteed for example by "Youth Quotas", will produce a better framework for climate politics and environmental politics.

Anja Karnein doubts these theses. Just because today's young people will be affected by the effects of climate change for longer, they are not per se more interested in a solution to this negative process. In addition, future "climate-friendly" behaviour cannot be assumed. And although in the U18 elections the Greens did get a higher percentage of votes than in the "real" federal elections, these votes also showed clearly that the established parties (CDU / CSU and SPD), did get the vast majority of votes, as they did in the real elections. Although "Youth Quotas" for other areas could be useful, they are not regarding the environmental policy; and although young people are more idealistic than older generations, she does not see any evidence that environmental policy is the top priority of young people.

Politicians tend to make snap decisions, the impacts of which will be felt in the near or distant future. They also tend to reflect the concerns of the older population more than the concerns of the youth. But politics must also take into account the problems of the distant future, like the climate change, when decisions are made. **Dr. Ivo Wallimann-Helmer** showed in his presentation three possible measures to bring politicians to a more far-sighted policy: 1) The question whether the votes of more highly-educated people should be given a greater weight than the votes of less-educated people. 2) The question whether young people should be given more influence during the elections. 3) The question whether elderly people should be excluded from the elections. Ivo Wallimann-Helmer rejects all three proposals because they undermine the normative fundament of democracy. In his view, young people need more help regarding their self-organization, so they can better articulate and represent their interests. Currently, they lack self-organization and thus influence. Like Anja Karnein, Ivo Wallimann-Helmer does not believe that "Youth Quotas" or the lowering of the voting age will produce greener policy.

During the discussion, it became clear that the other participants agree with the democratic-theoretical concerns of Ivo Wallimann-Helmer regarding his three proposals. But also with the same argument some participants made clear that the exclusion of minors from the elections is also problematic. The same arguments for excluding the young could also be taken as arguments for excluding elderly people from elections. Young people are said to be politically immature but on the other hand the mental abilities of older people also decrease the older they get. But none of the participants recommended excluding older people from the suffrage. What is clear is the unequal treatment of young and old regarding the right to vote.

**Dr. Dominic Roser** deals with the question whether "Youth Quotas" could lead to better climate policy. He sees the assumption that young people are particularly affected by climate change, and thus are particularly keen to mitigate the consequences of climate change. as a central argument of this thesis. But this argument is less strong than it may seem, so Roser contests. He argues that young people today have to endure only a small part of climate change; future and yet unborn generations will be rather more seriously affected. The justification for "Youth Quotas" that they lead to better environmental policy for the young is therefore dismissed by Dominic Roser.

Another focus of Dominic Roser's presentation is the general quality of life in the future. In the past, the standard of living and the quality of life have both risen steadily. However, there is a real risk that the standard of living will decline in the future. Dominic Roser justified this view by saying that there are too many and too high risks involved in the creation of the future and future policies (environment, economy, etc.). Although the high risks can provide a

high increase in the quality of life, there is also a real risk that a failure will bring a sharp downturn in the quality of living. Therefore, Dominic Roser calls for action to reduce significantly this risk in shaping the future, which could provide a small but steady increase in the quality of living.

Like Anja Karnein and Ivo Wallimann-Helmer before, Dominic Roser also does not see the causality that "Youth Quotas" will produce a better environmental policy. Most of the participants hold a similar position regarding a greener policy. Dominic Roser presented a risk-model which was very interesting for the participants. Most of them see the danger that future generations' living standards will not rise, or – in the worst case – will decrease. The main reasons are seen in today's environmental policy, economic policy, global financial policy and the regularly recurring crises. The limitation of the risk is supported by most participants, though this limitation should not tend to 0, because even stagnation means in some ways a step backwards. A certain risk remains necessary in order to favour certain innovations and developments.

**Heiko Burret** focused on the consequences of demographic changes, where older generations are taking over control of society at the expense of younger generations. He emphasized how politicians first and foremost are focusing on the interests of voters. Older people now represent the largest group of voters. As a result, politicians are paying more attention to their interests than the interests of other voting groups. The consequence of ignoring the interests of large voting groups is not being reelected or not being elected at all. Young politicians also have to bear this fact in mind; thus "Youth Quotas" in parliaments and political parties will have only a marginal effect. What should be introduced to prevent the strong marginalization of youth are measures linked to direct democracy as well as fiscal regulations such as debt limits, Burret argued.

The participants shared Burret's doubt concerning the possible effects of "Youth Quotas". However, they also questioned the proposed alternatives. Increased direct democracy does not imply that youth will be less marginalized; older voters would still represent their own interests and cast their votes correspondingly. Introducing measures such as debt limits does not guarantee policies that take special care of the interests of youth. Although the national debt would not rise, which is in general good regarding intergenerational justice, one can not predict how the available money will be spent. It could happen that spending for the young will be cut in favour of the old.

**Dr. Rafael Ziegler** discussed whether youth can act as change agents for a sustainable development or not. In conjunction with his discussion, he presented one of his own projects, the Youth Campaign "Big Jump Challenge" (<http://bigjumpchallenge.net/>). Children and youth all over Germany organized "Bathing Activities" in rivers and lakes, to raise awareness of themes such as water protection and the prevention of water pollution. Ziegler applied the experiences of this project to a possible introduction of "Youth Quotas". He argued that such quotas are not sufficient and effective enough to achieve more sustainable environmental policies.

**Dr. Radostin Kaloianov** was especially occupied with the ubiquity of quotas (that is, that quotas can be found everywhere). "What can quotas do?" was his key question. Kaloianov attempted to answer this question in two directions. First, he investigated the development and modernization of Western societies from a modernization-theoretical approach. He argued that, in modern capitalistic societies as the Western countries are today, quotas are present everywhere, particularly in the labour market. Life as a whole is regulated by invisible quotas.

Kaloianov sees quotas as a means to control the occupation of jobs, especially jobs that demand explicit requirements because they are rewarding particular merits and capabilities. Kaloianov was skeptical towards the introduction of quotas for disadvantaged groups, e.g. youth. He emphasized how everyone in a modern society is already benefitting from the existing quota-policy and existing quotas. Second, Kaloianov discussed the justice of quotas. He was critical towards policies where people are favored in the labour market on the basis of sex, skin colour, ethnic origins, age etc., in front of better-qualified applicants who are not favoured because they do not belong to one of the privileged quota-groups. Rather, he emphasized how quotas are already regulating spheres such as the labour market, because merits and capabilities in the end are rewarded, and that this is also a form of quota.

In the discussion that followed, the arguments of Kaloianov were assessed critically. His argument that specific requirements in a job description are equivalent to quotas was disputed. It was emphasized that explicit knowledge and capabilities are often necessary in certain jobs and positions, but that this can hardly be identified as quotas. Also the argument that quotas are unfair, and that they ultimately do not bring much to the table was contradicted. Several examples have shown that quotas and positive discrimination of certain groups (woman, minorities) unquestionably have led to fairer outcomes. The groups in question have, through quotas, been enabled to compete e.g. in the labour market on equal grounds to other groups. However, that youth quotas will have the same effect as gender quotas was disputed.

**Dr. Pieter Vanhuysse** presented the “Intergenerational Justice Index” (IJI) as well as addressing the question of proxy votes (that is, giving parents the right to vote on behalf of their child/children). First, Vanhuysse presented his study conducted for the Bertelsmann-Foundation. On the basis of four criteria, he generated an Intergenerational Justice Index, in which the OECD-countries were compared to each other. Several of the countries scored low on the IGI-index, depicting profound intergenerational challenges. To counterbalance this trend, Vanhuysse argues for the introduction of proxy votes. He emphasized that a proxy vote system will not only ensure a shift in the power balance between old and young generations in favour of youth, in addition it will also demand more just policies, seen from an intergenerational point of view. Through their parents, children and youth will be given influence in elections.

Several of the participants were skeptical regarding the introduction of proxy votes to improve intergenerational justice. The objections that were already raised against Birnbacher’s arguments in favour of proxy votes were repeated.

**Juliana Bidadanure** argued for an implementation of youth quotas and provided an instrumental justification. She claimed that youth quotas in parliaments can contribute to bringing about intergenerationally fairer outcomes.

She first presented two core challenges of intergenerational justice: (A) the challenge of justice between non-overlapping generations - or the long-term challenge of treating future generations fairly; and (B) the overlapping challenge of justice between current birth cohorts - or the shorter-term challenge of treating young people fairly. She argued that the environmental and economic prospects of younger and future generations are so dangerously threatened that it is a requirement of intergenerational justice to implement any policies that may increase our chances to improve their set of opportunities.

Juliana Bidadanure argued that there are strong reasons to believe that youth quotas can improve the chances to meet both objectives. Young people are fiercer to implement long-

termist policies like environmental policies, and young people are also more innovative in solving problems. On the other hand she also rejected the assumption that young people are "greener" and that they promote the interests of future generations. But youth quotas surely will increase the chance to promote youth interests. And second, a youth presence in parliaments would make it more unlikely for policymakers to be driven by false representations and prejudices. Finally Juliana Bidanure claimed that the involvement of each age group in social and political decision-making constitutes a crucial aspect of relational equality and that youth quotas could contribute to a symbolic acknowledgement of the equal political value of young people, as members of a community of equals. Beside the introduction of youth quotas, Juliana Bidanure also proposed the introduction of an Ombudsman for future generations. The implementation of youth quotas will produce fairer outcomes - that was the final conclusion made by Juliana Bidanure. But even regardless of such outcomes, there are strong reasons to find the underrepresentation of youth in politics worrying from the point of view of social cohesion and political equality.

At the end of the workshop, **Ashley Seager and Antony Mason** from the Intergenerational Foundation (IF), **Bernhard Winkler, Adrian Schell, Yvonne Eich and Danyal Bayaz** from the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG) organized a role-play session. All participants took part in a simulated cabinet-meeting. In this session, the different measures presented during the weekend (youth quotas, lowering the voting age to 16, voting age without age limitations, proxy votes etc.) were subjected to a vote. Before each voting procedure, the benefits and disadvantages of each measure were discussed. Despite the numerous objections to "Youth Quotas" throughout the workshop, the majority at the end favoured their introduction. Lowering the voting age to 16 was unanimously agreed upon, while half of the group voted against abolishing all voting age limitations. The introduction of proxy votes was rejected.

In his dinner speech **Prof. Dr. Marcel Wissenburg** analyzed youth quotas from a libertarian perspective. He therefore opted for a more pragmatic answer to quotas. He suggested that quotas for the young can be tolerable in the context of justice between existing generations, since they may, under the right circumstances, limit abuse of negotiation power, thus guarantee a fair representation of interests, and prevent the construction of exploitative (oppressive) institutions. Where justice towards future, non-existing generations is concerned, however, it is at the very least quotas protecting minimum representation of the elderly, and perhaps even exclusion of the middle-aged and young, that would be more appropriate. If the aim of a quota rule is to impartially represent the interests of absentees, the most sensible candidate for representation is, after all, he whose personal interests are least likely to be hurt by those represented. Finally he suggested that even in a representative, deliberative democracy a better instrument than a quota is available and is far more urgently needed: veto rights.