Shared Democratic Values and Youth Participation

Why Youth Need a Seat #Atthetable

POLICY REPORT

FUTURE LEADERS NETWORK

Y7

United Kingdom 2021

Contents

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Introduction

In 2021, the United Kingdom hosts the Group of 7 (G7) Presidency. One of the U.K. Presidency's four policy priorities is to 'champion our shared democratic values'[1] throughout the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, the U.K. Prime Minister has invited attendance from the guest countries of Australia, India, South Africa and South Korea to attend the global gathering of leaders on 11 – 13 June, in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, and has convened the 'Interior' Ministerial Track to progress actions in relation to shared democratic values.

The Youth 7 (Y7) is the official youth[2] engagement group to the G7. In 2021, in line with the U.K.'s G7 Presidency, the Y7 is being hosted by the Future Leaders Network. The aim of the Y7 is to offer young people (aged between 18 and 30 years of age) in the G7 member countries the chance to share their priorities and recommendations, with a view to informing the decisions reached by Ministers and Leaders at their respective G7 meetings.

This paper argues that in considering actions to 'champion shared democratic values', G7 leaders must take action to catalyse youth participation in the G7 process, and in democratic processes more broadly. Positive steps have already been made – for example, the establishment of the Y7 as one of the engagement groups for the G-summitry since 2011 – but these must now be amplified through G7 countries' binding commitment to hold the annual engagement groups summits including the Y7 within the G7 processes, efforts of which can be coordinated by an appointed minister/secretariat of youth through working *with* young people. Youth participation in international and domestic political agendas is essential – now, more than ever – for G7 countries and beyond, to 'Build Back Better'[3] from this contemporary crisis which has disproportionately affected young people.

Acknowledgements

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[1] 'Members and Guests,' United Kingdom, Cabinet Office, accessed April 20, 2021, https://www.g7uk.org/members-guests/.

[2] Throughout this report, youth is defined broadly to include children and young adults. Survey data uses the distinction between the age groups of 18-34 years old and those above.

[3] 'Policy Priorities,' United Kingdom, Cabinet Office, accessed April 20, 2021, https://www.g7uk.org/policy-priorities/.

Executive Summary

As the U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson remarked in his opening address of the Y7 Summit, the G7 is a 'values-led organisation'.[4] Established against the backdrop of the need to respond to systemic economic crises,[5] its history and evolution since 1970s is animated by a shared vision of democracy and a formidable commitment to collaboration in the face of the pressing challenges of our time. Yet, its laudable intention is met with a notable lack of public confidence – only 1 in 4 people have confidence in the G7 to be able to solve shared international challenges according to a YouGov-Cambridge survey conducted in the UK in 2021, which worryingly decreases to around 1 in 5 young people aged between 18 and 34. As the G7 Summit convenes to co-create a roadmap for post-crisis recovery, G7 leaders have the opportunity and the responsibility to lead by example in championing democratic values, and in engaging youth to build a better future for *all*.

If the G7 truly seeks to promote democratic values, world leaders should heed the youth dissatisfaction with democracy[6] as a sign of democratic decline. Across the G7, the proportion of youth who are satisfied with the functioning of democracy has decreased from the peak of 71.7 % prior to the financial crisis to 56.2%[7] as of early 2020. Whilst an overwhelming majority of young people continue to believe in the importance of the key principles of democracy such as free and regular elections (91.4%)[8] and freedom of speech (95.6%)[9], the proportion who think it is 'essential' to live in democracy has fallen to become a minority among youth in many established democracies.[10] Researchers are exploring a number of reasons for this decline in satisfaction and support, with analysis finding that in developed democracies, one possible contributing factor to this trend is 'economic exclusion'.[11] This factor will, no doubt, become more prominent in the aftermath of the pandemic – with a recent report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) noting that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected certain groups of youth,[12] now at the risk of becoming a 'lockdown generation'.[13]

While there is a pervasive sense of youth apathy towards politics, our analysis indicates that young people in the G7 countries want to participate – but in new and innovative ways. Youth participation in civic life is expanding and changing, shifting from voting to cause-oriented activities; from political parties to social movements.[14] Young people also increasingly see the potential of new technologies to broaden participation, with online participation found to be the most popular medium among youth in the UK. Notably, 44% of youth stated that online petitions and sharing and posting contents on social media were effective ways of participating in democracy, compared to 35% for voting in national and local elections and just 17% for joining political parties. 'Democratic innovations'[15] based on participatory and deliberative models of democracy,[16] some using digital tools to engage the wider public and targeting youth, are already emanating from across the G7 and D11 countries. G7 leaders can draw lessons from these developments, and meaningfully deploy these advances for youth engagement.

[4] Boris Johnson, 'Prime Minister Boris Johnson Opens the Y7 Summit 2021' (opening speech, the Youth 7 summit, London, May 14, 2021).

[5] Peter I. Hajnal, 'Civil Society and G8 Accountability,' in *Building Global Democracy?: Civil Society and Accountable Global Governance*, ed. Jan Aart Scholte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 183, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511921476.

[6] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?' (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Centre for the Future of Democracy, 2020), https://www.cam.ac.uk/system/files/youth_and_satisfaction_with_democracy.pdf.

[7] Data provided by the Centre for Future of Democracy.

[8] Author's calculation based on Pew Research Center's Global Attitude Survey 2019. Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The opinions expressed herein, including any implications for policy, are those of the author and not of Pew Research Center.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, 'The Signs of Deconsolidation,' *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (2017): 6.

[11] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?, '16-18.

[12] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Youth and Covid-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-Being*, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_753026.pdf, 2-3.

[13] ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, 2020, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745963.pdf, 2.

[14] Pippa Norris, 'Young People and Political Activism: From the Politics of Loyalties to the Politics of Choice?', 2004, *Civic engagement in the 21st Century: Toward a Scholarly and Practical Agenda* (The University of Southern California, October 1 to October 2, 2004), 7-16, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pippa-Norris-2/publication/237832623_Young_People_Political_Activism/links/569153d708aee91f69a50822/Young-People-Political-Activism.pdf.

[15] Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609848.

[16] David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 3rd ed (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2006).

The Youth 7 2021 has championed the voice of young people today, and those yet to come, and heralded world-leading opportunities for young people to participate in the G7 process. 10,000 young people from across the G7 have contributed to the design of 36 policy recommendations, and Y7 leaders have spoken at official G7 Working Group and Ministerial meetings. But, the highly inclusive approach taken by this year's Y7 is an exception, not the norm. Rather than treating youth as 'apprentice-citizens',[17] whose time for political engagement is yet to come, G7 leaders must tackle systemic and participatory exclusion which marginalises young people from the important decisions about our future.

This report therefore calls on G7 leaders to:

Negotiate a binding commitment to hold annual engagement group summits including the Y7

Allocate resources to underfunded engagement groups through a pool of funding from all the G7 countries to cover the operational costs and offer honorarium or non-monetary compensation to incentivise and remove barriers to inclusive participation;

Ensure Y7 participation in high-level decision making processes as stakeholders, and increase transparency to the public by livestreaming select, appropriate Ministerial meetings;

Increase awareness of the G7 processes and offer learning opportunities through Mock G7 programmes and other promotional activities

Appoint (and where a relevant bureau already exists, clarify the mandate and responsibility of) a Minister of Youth or a Secretariat dedicated to work with young people as partners

Coordinate and co-design participatory opportunities with youth in the G7 countries;

Consider parliamentary quotas and other measures for youth to ensure representation of future generations

For all the barriers that exist to enhancing youth agency and participation, at stake is our shared democratic values. Since its inception, the G7 has been about leadership, as well as a convening of open international dialogue. Historically, the G7's exclusivity had been justified for shouldering the 'systemic responsibility'[18] of global governance.[19] However, amidst 'unusual' levels of uncertainty,[20] the most well-devised policies and ambitious goals of the G7 are unlikely to be able to bring tangible positive changes without the support and input of the citizens today. To make the inclusive approach of the Y7 2021 an international standard for participation, the Y7 and other engagement groups need to become permanent components of the G7 operations, rather than a part of an ad-hoc outreach. By appointing and clarifying the mandate of a Minister/Secretariat of youth, participatory opportunities can be co-designed through working with young people. As exemplified by the Y7 communiqué, young people can bring bold ideas, fresh perspectives and much-needed future-oriented thinking to the G7 in planning the recovery from the contemporary crisis. And, according to a YouGov-Cambridge survey conducted in the UK, knowing that the G7 consults the engagement groups including the Y7 increases young people's confidence in the G7 by seven percentage points (21% to 28%). That is why – today, more than ever – youth need a seat at the table.

[17] David Owen, 'Dilemmas and Opportunities for the Young Active Citizen,' Youth Studies Australia 15, no.1 (1996), cited in Ellen Quintelier, 'Differences in Political Participation between Young and Old People,' *Contemporary Politics* 13, no. 2 (June 2007): 166, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569770701562658.

[18] Tristen Naylor, *Social Closure and International Society: Status Groups from the Family of Civilised Nations to the G20*, Global Governance (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 119.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Mohamed A. El-Erian, 'The Pandemic's Complex Cocktail,' *Project Syndicate*, October 6, 2020, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/tenuous-factors-behind-strong-markets-despite-weakening-fundamentals-by-mohamed-a-el-erian-2020-10?barrier=accesspaylog.

Methodology and Data Limitations

This report defines 'youth' broadly to include children and young adults, and the Y7 typically works with young people aged between 18 and 30 years old. For most of the survey-based analysis within this report, age-based definition is used to distinguish young people aged between 18 and 34 years old from the older cohorts, unless otherwise specified. Relevant academic literature and research was retrieved using academic journal databases, including JSTOR, ScienceDirect and Taylor and Francis Online, as well as Cambridge University Libraries Collections. Several sets of search terms were used, which combined related terms and synonyms of 'youth', 'participation' and 'democracy'. The expanding body of grey literature on these topics from international organisations and NGOs was also consulted. Finally, additional guidance was sought from an expert in the G-summitry, Dr Tristen Naylor on background knowledge and reading recommendations.

In addition to the extant research, this report also draws upon the burgeoning survey-based quantitative data on recent trends on democracy and participation, which cover some of the G7 and D11 countries, ranging from 2015 to 2020. We have also conducted new primary research through surveys collaborating with Opinium UK and the YouGov-Cambridge Centre in 2021 to investigate the public perception of the G7, following generous guidance from experts Dr Joel Rogers de Waal and Dr Roberto Stefan Foa. Nonetheless, this report has certain limitations with regards to data coverage and availability as well as literature used, due to the scope of the study. Much of the research included in this report is set in the contexts of Europe and North America, results of which may not be generalisable in different contexts across the G7 and D11 countries. Further, the timeframe of the data in this report and coverage of countries included differ for each survey. Lastly, most of the data presented are cross-sectional, providing a snapshot of the trends. Ideally, this should be expanded to time series in order to examine the patterns further. As such, the evidence in this report is open to further interpretation and elaboration. The following table summarises the timeframe and coverage.

Survey and Source	Year	Countries Included (Out of D11 countries)
Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Research Centre[21]	2015	Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Africa, South Korea, the UK, the USA
International Survey of Youth Attitude, Cabinet Office of Japan[22]	2018	France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the UK, the USA
Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Research Centre[23]	2019	Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, South Africa, South Korea, the UK, the USA
YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project, the YouGov-Cambridge Centre	2020	Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the USA
2021 U.K. Youth Perspectives,[24] Opinium	2021	UK
YouGov-Cambridge survey, the YouGov-Cambridge Centre	2021	UK
World Values Survey Wave 7	2017-2021	Australia, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the USA

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[21] Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The opinions expressed herein, including any implications for policy, are those of the author and not of Pew Research Center.

[22] The data for this secondary analysis, "International Survey of Youth Attitude 2018, Cabinet Office of Japan," was provided by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.

[23] Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The opinions expressed herein, including any implications for policy, are those of the author and not of Pew Research Center.

[24] Opinium Research carried out an online survey of 2,000 14-30 year olds in the UK from 1st to 16th March 2021. Results have been weighted to representative criteria. The Future Leaders Network also conducted focus groups among young people aged 16-30 in March and April 2021. The research was commissioned by The Future Leaders Network and led by Y7 and Y20 UK Delegates, and funded by the UK Cabinet Office.

Section 1. Democracy, Youth and the G7

Democracy and Its Challenges

Democracy is a complex term, if not for its historically and geographically varying meanings, then for its use to describe both an ideal and an actuality.[25] In light of almost universal disenchantment with politics,[26] claims abound that democracy is now in 'crisis'.[27] While we must not exaggerate the extent of the issue, there are some signs that may prove too costly for the G7 leaders to brush aside and dismiss simply as alarmist in the long term. As the world's leading industrial democracies, the G7 should be at the forefront of addressing these concerns.

Youth Satisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy

Around the world, youth satisfaction with the functioning of democracy is waning.[28] Importantly, this is the case in both absolute and relative terms, in comparison with how older generations felt at the same life stages, suggesting an intergenerational divide.[29] Although the aggregate data masks a variety of trends across the countries, there is an overall decline in youth satisfaction with democracy in the G7 member countries (Figure 1). After reaching a peak of over 71% in 2007, it has not restored to the pre-financial crisis level.

Figure 1.
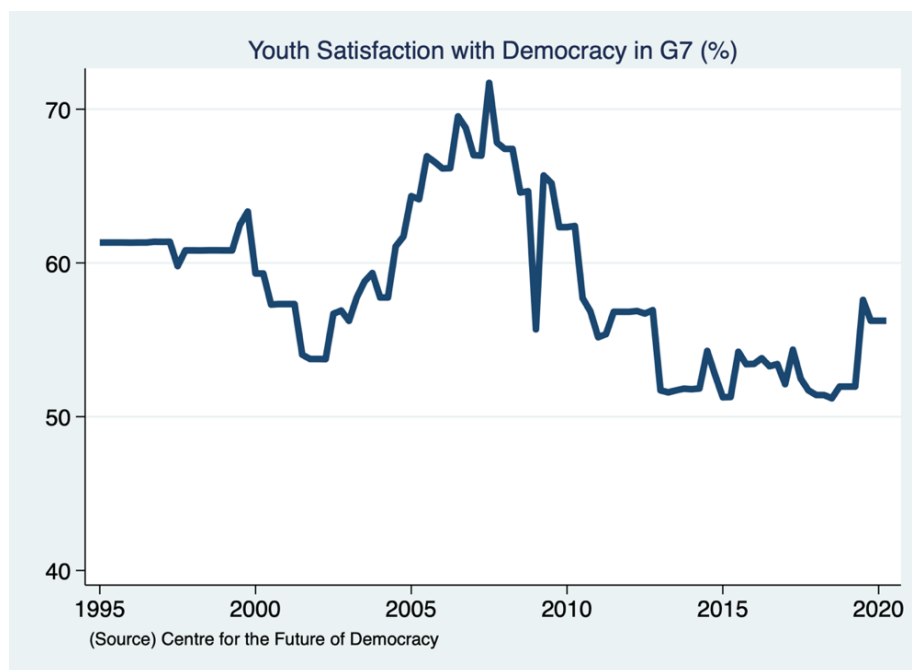
One prominent explanation to this trend in established democracies is 'economic exclusion' caused by high youth unemployment and wealth inequality.[30] Young people are disproportionately found in more precarious types of jobs, with low satisfaction in spite of their higher level of qualifications and education reflecting the demands of credentialism.[31] This is echoed in the results of the International Survey of Youth Attitude,[32] showing that out of 15

[25] Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, 'Representation and Democracy: Uneasy Alliance', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27, no. 3 (September 2004): 337, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2004.00109.x.

[26] Colin Hay, *Why We Hate Politics* (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 153.

[27] Hélène Landemore, *Open Democracy: Reinventing Popular Rule for the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 25.

[28] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?,' 2.

[29] Ibid.

[30] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?, '16-18.

[31] Harriet Bradley and Jacques van Hoof, 'Introduction,' in *Young People in Europe: Labour Markets and Citizenship,* ed. Harriet Bradley and Jacques van Hoof (Bristol, UK: Policy, 2005), 2.

[32] The data for this secondary analysis, "International Survey of Youth Attitude 2018, Cabinet Office of Japan," was provided by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.

societal issues surveyed, the highest number of young people in France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the UK and the US feel that 'disparity between the wealthy and the poor' (43.4%), 'disparity in income and work based on educational background' (37.2%), and 'hard work is not rewarded' (35.4%) were problems in their respective country.

A majority of young people in most of the D11 countries believe that children will grow up to be financially worse off compared to current generations according to the results of Pew Research Centre's Global Attitudes Survey,[33] with an increase since 2015 observed in India, Japan, South Africa, the UK and the USA. An even greater proportion of older cohorts expressed their pessimism for the next generation in most of the D11 countries. At least from the citizens' perspective, the democratic promise of prosperity and progress[34] is not matched by optimism for the future. This finding also elucidates the increased need for a long-term strategy to enhance intergenerational justice[35] for D11 countries, and a greater involvement of young people is an important step towards commencing an intergenerational dialogue.

Figure 2.

(Source) Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Survey, 2015, 2019.
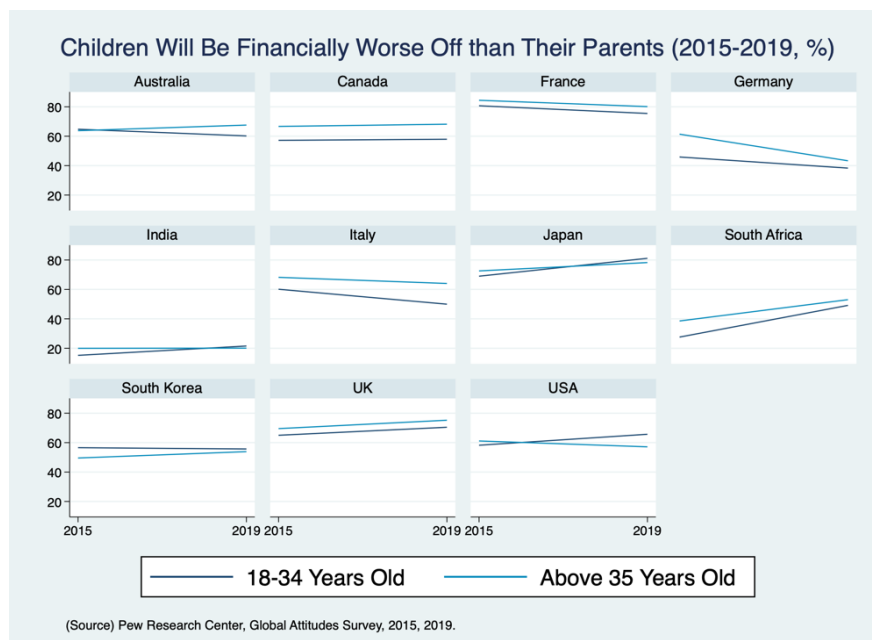
Importantly, these factors are further exacerbated by the contemporary crisis as young people are disproportionately affected by disruption in education and employment, facing the risk of becoming a 'lockdown generation'.[36] In particular, the youth unemployment rate – which was already higher than the overall unemployment rate prior to the onset of the pandemic[37] – has increased in many of the G7 countries, reaching the worryingly high rate of 33% in Italy during the first quarter of 2021.[38] Given the potential relation found between 'excess' youth unemployment and satisfaction with democracy,[39] this is a cause for concern for the G7's democracies and beyond. Furthermore, research into young people's vulnerability in the labour market suggests that the adverse economic impact of the pandemic will have lasting ramifications for youth, with analysis based in the US finding that entering into the job market during economic downturns negatively affects young people's earning potential for as much as 10 years into

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[33] Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The opinions expressed herein, including any implications for policy, are those of the author and not of Pew Research Center.

[34] OECD, *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?*, https://www.oecd.org/gov/fit-for-generations-global-youth-report-highlights.pdf, 4.

[35] Ibid.

[36] ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, 2.

[37] ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, 6.

[38] 'Euro Area Unemployment at 8.1%,' Eurostat, accessed May 14, 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/11563067/3-30042021-CP-EN.pdf/5e5aae01-e15d-b8bd-71fb-4096b88f4120?t=1619705933576.

[39] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?,' 18.

the future.[40] Finding effective means to reflect young people's worries and concerns for their future in policy-making should be one of the G7's priorities, not only from an economic perspective, but also for safeguarding and restoring youth trust in democracy.

Youth and Representation

In planning the recovery from the contemporary crisis, numerical marginalisation of youth observed in elected bodies across G7 countries is a potential cause for concern. The Inter-Parliamentary Union's latest report in 2021 finds that young people under 30 constitute only 2.6% of the elected representatives worldwide,[41] highlighting the level of underrepresentation of 1.8 billion young people.[42] The G7 and D11 member countries are no exceptions. Indeed, the average age of MPs in the single or lower chamber in D11 countries range from 44.3 to 57.6 years old. The proportion of MPs under 30 in lower chambers also remains very low, varying between 0% and 6.8%. Given the demographic trend of aging society in the G7 countries, weak youth presence in representative bodies is unlikely to be corrected. Whilst descriptive underrepresentation of youth does not preclude well-functioning representative democracy per se – just as simply assigning proportionate number of young people as representative would not necessarily make democracy better – the ability to represent the interests of different age groups has not empirically translated into the practice of adequate representation.[43] The marginalisation of young people's interests may result in a 'parallel political reality'[44] between the different age groups, and it may fuel the frustration and young people's perception that their voices are not heard.

Figure 3.

	% of under 30	Average age	Minimum age (Eligibility)
Italy	6.83%	44.3	25
France	5.55%	51	18
South Africa[45]	4.71%	-	18
UK	3.69%	51	18
India	0.79%	51	25
USA	0.46%	58.4	25
Germany	0.42%	49.4	18
Australia	0%	50.7	18
Canada[46]	-	52	18
Japan[47]	0%	54.7	25
South Korea	0%	54.9	25

(Source) The Inter-Parliamentary Union (2021), Takazawa et al. (2019), Canada, House of Commons (2020). Age as of the beginning of the legislature.

Echoing this concern is the result of the Global Attitudes Survey, according to which over half of youth in the D11 countries overall feel that most elected officials did not care about what people like them think. Whilst this is not

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[40] Hannes Schwandt and Till von Wachter, 'Unlucky Cohorts: Estimating the Long-Term Effects of Entering the Labor Market in a Recession in Large Cross-Sectional Data Sets,' *Journal of Labor Economics* 37, no. S1 (January 2019): 164–165, https://doi.org/10.1086/701046.

[41] The Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Youth Participation in National Parliaments*, 2021, https://www.ipu.org/file/10711/download, 9.

[42] 'Youth and the SDGs,' the United Nations, accessed June 1, 2021, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/.

[43] Tomaž Deželan, 'Intergenerational Dialogue for Democracy' (Discussion Paper, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2017), 24, https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/intergenerational-dialogue-for-democracy.pdf.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Average age of the representatives in the National Assembly was not publicly available.

[46] Data as of 2020. Canada, House of Commons, 'Report to Canadians 2020' (Report, House of Commons Administration, 2020), 13, https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/ReportToCanadians/2020/Reporttocanadians_2020_Eng.pdf,

[47] Data as of 2017. Miyuki Takazawa et al., '*Deta de Miru Gikai* [Observing the Parliament through Data]' (Issue Brief, National Diet Library, Japan, 2019), 9, https://dl.ndl.go.jp/view/download/digidepo_11335971_po_1065.pdf?contentNo=1 .

unique to youth, such feelings may alienate young people from democratic values. This survey also found that there is a relationship between the perception of politicians being 'out of touch'[48] and the level of dissatisfaction with democracy.[49] Indeed, among D11 countries, the level of satisfaction with democracy differs by over 20 percentage points between those who think that the elected officials care about what they think (67.7%) and those who believe otherwise(41.4%).

Figure 4.

Disagree with 'Most elected officials care about what people like me think' (%)

18-34 Years Old   Above 35 Years Old

(Source) Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Survey 2019.Combined data of 'Mostly Disagree' and 'Completely Disagree'
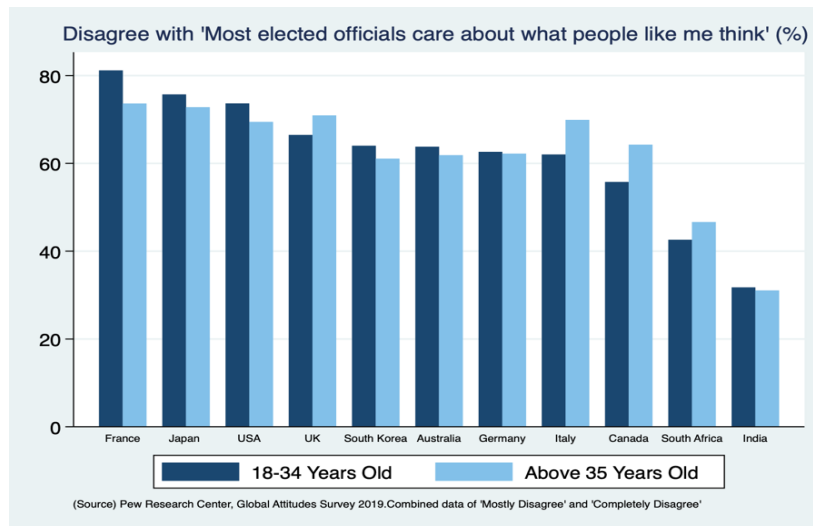
Youth and Principles of Democracy

Youth satisfaction with democracy in the G7 countries, insofar as it measures the level of contentment with how it works, does not reflect the level of support for democracy as a form of government and its accompanying principles.[50] It is therefore argued that while 'diffuse' support for democracy[51] as a regime remains sound, there continues to be a 'democratic paradox' – citizens have low confidence in democracy and its constitutive institutions, and yet still continue to support democracy as an ideal.[52]

In this regard, young people can be characterised as 'dissatisfied democrats',[53] who value democracy but are discontent with the gap they observe between their ideal and democracies' performance.[54] Indeed, an overwhelming majority of people in D11 countries continue to support democracy as the ideal regime type, as well as the key principles of democracy. Figure 5 below shows the percentage of young people who indicated that these principles are important. There are some notable differences between these countries, with the proportion of young people who think some of these principles are important comparatively lower in India, South Africa, and to a lesser extent, in Japan. Nonetheless, the result demonstrates substantial support for these principles among youth, and these values indeed appear to be shared among D11 countries.

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[48] Richard Wike, Laura Silver, and Alexandra Castillo, 'Many Across the Globe Are Dissatisfied with How Democracy Is Working' (Report, Pew Research Center, 2020), 4, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/04/Pew-Research-Center_Global-Views-of-Democracy-Report_2019-04-29_Updated-2019-04-30.pdf.

[49] Ibid.

[50] R.S Foa et al., 'Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect?' 4.

[51] Jacques Thomassen and Carolien van Ham, 'A Legitimacy Crisis of Representative Democracy?,' in *Myth and Reality of the Legitimacy Crisis: Explaining Trends and Cross-National Differences in Established Democracies*, ed. Carolien van Ham et al. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6.

[52] Robert A. Dahl, 'A Democratic Paradox?,' *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (2000): 35–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/2658032.

[53] Hans-Dieter Klingemann, 'Dissatisfied Democrats,' in *The Civic Culture Transformed*, ed. Russell J. Dalton and Christian Welzel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 116–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139600002.010.

[54] Aaron J Martin, *Young People and Politics: Political Engagement in the Anglo-American Democracies* (New York: Routledge, 2012),136.

Figure 5.

	Religious Freedom	Media Freedom	Gender Equality	Freedom of Speech	Free Elections	Internet Freedom
Australia	89%	95%	98%	97%	94%	94%
Canada	93%	92%	99%	93%	95%	92%
France	88%	94%	99%	98%	96%	97%
Germany	96%	85%	98%	98%	90%	93%
India	93%	65%	89%	64%	81%	55%
Italy	94%	90%	97%	93%	88%	89%
Japan	56%	74%	86%	88%	82%	88%
South Africa	92%	80%	81%	74%	73%	74%
South Korea	81%	94%	95%	98%	95%	97%
UK	95%	94%	98%	98%	94%	93%
USA	98%	95%	99%	97%	95%	92%
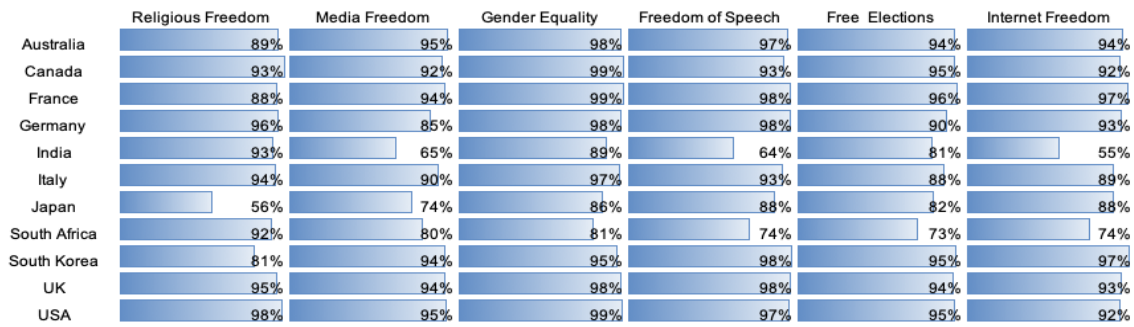
(Source) Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Survey 2019. Combined data of respondents aged between 18 and 34 years old who think the principle is 'somewhat' or 'very' important.

However, the optimism over the triumph of liberal democratic values[55] over other regime types is tempered by some signs of democratic decline among youth in the G7 countries. For instance, the proportion of young people who think it is 'absolutely important' to live in democracy has fallen to become a minority in many established democracies,[56] with the latest World Values Survey[57] data echoing this finding in Japan (20.1%), the USA (31.1%) and Australia (35.6%). Even in Germany, in which a majority think democracy is essential, the proportion of people who think living in a democratically governed system is absolutely important is lower among young people under 35 ye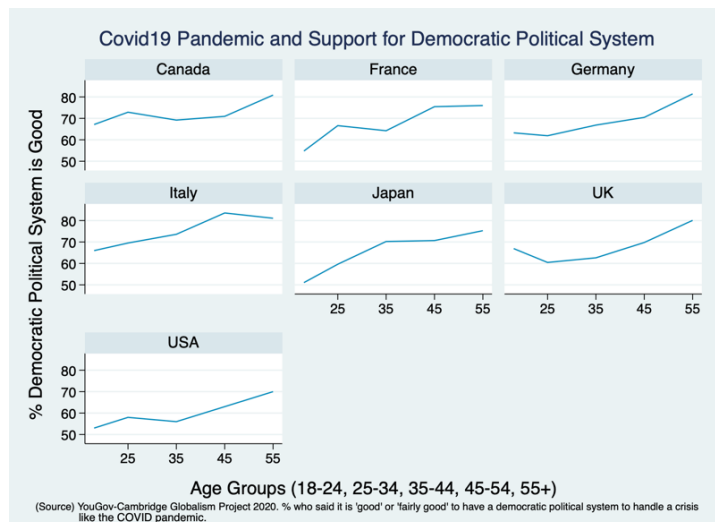ars old (61.6%) compared to those above 35 years old (80.0%). While the evidence based on attitudinal data can be elusive, it does suggest that democratic values need to be nurtured rather than assumed. In highlighting the democratic paradox, Dahl rings a bell that support for democratic principles is not to be taken for granted,[58] and that continued dissatisfaction with democracy's functioning in the long term may eventually erode confidence in democratic values and principles. This warning appears ever more pertinent today, particularly among youth in the G7 countries and beyond.

Whilst a substantial majority across the G7 countries think that having a democratic political system is good for handling the ongoing global health crisis,[59] this level is substantially lower among youth compared to older cohorts. Given the sheer scale and its global nature, the contemporary crisis offers an opportunity as well as a responsibility for the G7 leaders to rethink the coordinates of our democracy. In order to build back better, G7 leaders need to heed these warning signs, and put democratic inclusivity at the heart of the policy planning.

Figure 6.

(Source) YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project 2020. % who said it is 'good' or 'fairly good' to have a democratic political system to handle a crisis like the COVID pandemic.

[55] Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?,' *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989),4, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24027184.

[56] Foa and Mounk, 'The Signs of Deconsolidation,' 6.

[57] Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.). 2020. World Values Survey: Round Seven – Country-Pooled Datafile. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WVSA Secretariat. doi.org/10.14281/18241.1

[58] Dahl, 'A Democratic Paradox,' 39-40.

[59] Eir Nolsoe, 'Which Political Systems Are Good for Handling a Pandemic?,' accessed May 20, 2021, https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2021/02/04/which-political-systems-are-good-handling-pandemic.

Moreover, if the G7 2021 is truly about democratic values, world leaders need to ensure that these values are shared across all generations. In particular, an understanding of young peoples' conceptualisation of democracy has practical significance based on political psychology's impressionable years thesis, according to which political orientations are shaped in these formative years of life and remain resistant over time.[60] To investigate further into youth understanding of democracy, a survey conducted by Opinium in March 2021 asked young people aged between 14 and 30 in the UK what democracy meant to them, as summarised in a word cloud below.

Figure 7.

(Source) 2021 U.K. Youth Perspectives Survey, Opinium, created with TagCrowd on https://tagcrowd.com.

In line with extant research, freedom (11%, n=211), fairness (9%, n=187), and equality (7%,n=140) particularly stand out as core values of young people's understanding of democracy. Beyond these categorisations, the expressions varied from minimal understanding such as 'voting in elections' to more complex notions of 'political equality based on rule of law'. A substantial number of responses also indicated that democracy to youth in the UK today means that 'everyone has a say' (12%, n=237) and that 'everyone is heard' (2%, n=30). However, 12% of the total responses (n=239) expressed apathy or lack of knowledge about democracy. An additional 10% of the responses (n=191) contained various negative sentiments towards the functioning of contemporary democracy. This data alone does not indicate whether the apathetic, if not antipathetic,[61] tendencies observed in a substantial minority of youth in the UK denotes a shift in their values. However, it does raise a question over the extent to which democratic values championed by the G7 and D11 countries are shared among heterogeneous youth today.

Section 1 Summary

Youth dissatisfaction with democracy is prevalent across the G7 countries. While there remains a broad support for democratic principles, the underrepresentation of young people's interests may contribute to their further disillusionment. If the G7 truly seeks to uphold democratic values throughout the recovery from the ongoing crisis, world leaders must not dismiss the warning signs of democratic decline. To ensure that young people's concerns are adequately addressed, the time appears ripe for revisiting another key dimension of democracy, that is – participation.

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[60] Mario Quaranta, 'What Makes up Democracy? Meanings of Democracy and Their Correlates among Adolescents in 38 Countries,' *Acta Politica* 55, no. 4 (October 2020): 518, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-019-00129-4.
[61] Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, 'Youth and the Populist Wave,' *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 45, no. 9–10 (December 2019): 1015–17, https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719872314.

Section 2. Youth Participation in the G7 Democracies

Youth (Dis)engagement?

Even the most minimalist conception of democratic theory is premised upon citizen participation as the *sine qua non* of democracy.[62] Indeed, if citizens played no part, the governments simply would not qualify as democracy.[63] Yet, even with a cursory review of the literature and media depiction of youth participation in the G7 countries, one is faced with an overwhelming sense of apathy and passivity in formal politics among youth today. Some decry the declining level of youth participation in formal politics, evidenced by low electoral turnout and the dwindling membership of traditional parties.[64] Importantly, these patterns of withdrawal from formal politics is observed across many of established democracies with striking generalisability.[65] Pointing to the generational decline, Putnam for instance contends that the decline in political participation is but one of the most visibly prominent signs of overall disengagement and the dwindling of social capital such as trust.[66]

Yet others highlight the expanding and changing forms of youth participation in civic life, and argue that 'youth participation is evolving rather than declining'.[67] For instance, Norris cautions against overlooking the changing repertoires of youth engagement with politics – from voting to cause-oriented activities; from political parties to social movements.[68] Indeed, young people today are often found at the centre of mobilised efforts in time- and resource-intensive participatory mediums, including protesting events.[69] Today, it appears increasingly insufficient to simply equate periodic involvement in elections with dozens of 'crosses on a ballot paper' as the test of democratic citizenry.[70] However, these conceptualisations of youth as 'critical citizens' precludes the explanation that there is simply more for citizens to be critical about in democratic politics today.[71] Grouping non-participation of young people in one category of quiescence may mask different reasons they do not engage; some might be politically estranged, others may be apathetic, still others may be disillusioned with the functioning of democracy.[72]

Emerging Trends and Patterns of Participation

In classical typologies of institutionalised participation and non-institutionalised participation, young people are decisively more prone to participate through the latter outside of electoral politics.[73] In light of new and emerging forms of participation among youth, some express concerns over conceptual overstretching of political participation.[74] Indeed, if one considers an exhaustive list of activities through which youth engage with politics, it appears that almost anything can be construed as political participation. Particularly, there is no consensus as to whether some types of online participation, such as 'likes' on social media constitute political participation.[75] While the ease and low cost with which citizens can engage in politics online is remarkable in itself, online clickstream activism – as have come to be known as 'clicktivism' and 'slacktivism' – often carries negative connotations,[76] or is dismissed for its limited impact.[77] Furthermore, some voice concerns that such online activities are encroaching

[62] Deželan, 'Intergenerational Dialogue for Democracy,' 23.

[63] Geraint Parry and George Moyser, 'More Participation, More Democracy?,' in *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, ed. David Beetham (London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1994), 44.

[64] Robert D. Putnam, 'Conclusion,' in *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, ed. Robert D. Putnam (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 404-6.

[65] Putnam, 'Conclusion,' 410.

[66] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 35.

[67] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2016: Youth Civic Engagement*, 2016, https://doi.org/10.18356/a4137e60-en, 79.

[68] Norris, 'Young People and Political Activism: From the Politics of Loyalties to the Politics of Choice?,' 7-16.

[69] Bart Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life: Stories of Hope and Disillusion* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 10.

[70] Parry and Moyser, 'More Participation, More Democracy?,' 50.

[71] Hay, *Why We Hate Politics*, 49.

[72] Parry and Moyser, 'More Participation, More Democracy?,' *50-1.*

[73] Julia Weiss, 'What Is Youth Political Participation? Literature Review on Youth Political Participation and Political Attitudes,' *Frontiers in Political Science* 2 (15 May 2020): 1, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2020.00001.

[74] Weiss, 'What Is Youth Political Participation? Literature Review on Youth Political Participation and Political Attitudes,' 3.

[75] Weiss, 'What Is Youth Political Participation? Literature Review on Youth Political Participation and Political Attitudes,' 2.

[76] David Karpf, 'Online Political Mobilization from the Advocacy Group's Perspective: Looking Beyond Clicktivism,' *Policy & Internet* 2, no. 4 (22 January 2010): 7–41, https://doi.org/10.2202/1944-2866.1098.

[77] Evgeny Morozov, 'The Brave New World of Slacktivism', *Foreign Policy*, May 19, 2009, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/05/19/the-brave-new-world-of-slacktivism/.

upon formal participation, threatening to replace core activities such as voting in elections. Importantly, other forms of participation, political or otherwise, cannot become a substitute[78] for the exercise of democratic right and responsibility to vote in elections. In so far as accountability and legitimacy of democracy is premised upon citizens' participation, the declining level of youth participation in formal politics including voting should be taken seriously.

However, considerations and actions to address the decline in electoral turnout does not necessarily preclude the acknowledgment of new and unconventional forms of participation emerging among youth. In light of these changing preferences of youth, Harris et al. advocates for a shift away from a dualistic characterisation of youth, and instead proposes to encourage formal participation while acknowledging the everyday activities through which youth engage with political matters.[79] Rather than relegating new forms of participation as invalid or condemning young people for their apathy, one should strive to explore these typologies to understand better why youth exhibit low levels of engagement in formal politics in the first place. Put simply, the question of *whether* they participate is of paramount importance, but an understanding *where* they participate also matters.[80] Insofar as young people's participation and how they become politically socialised offer a glimpse into the futures of democracies, an understanding of youth participation can elucidate the blurry contours of our democracies,[81] beyond engagement and disengagement paradigms.

Young people decisively prefer online participation as a means for engaging in democracy, according to an Opinium survey conducted in the UK in 2021. Out of 13 mediums of participation, 'sharing or posting contents on social media' and 'online petitions' were perceived as the most effective mediums of participation, with 69% of the pre-voting age group and 76% of the voting age group indicating that at least one of the online mediums of participation (social media, online petitions and online forums) was effective. The result also shows that 'voting in national or local elections' is perceived to be an effective medium of participation only by 30% of the pre-voting age group and 37% of the voting age group.

Figure 8.
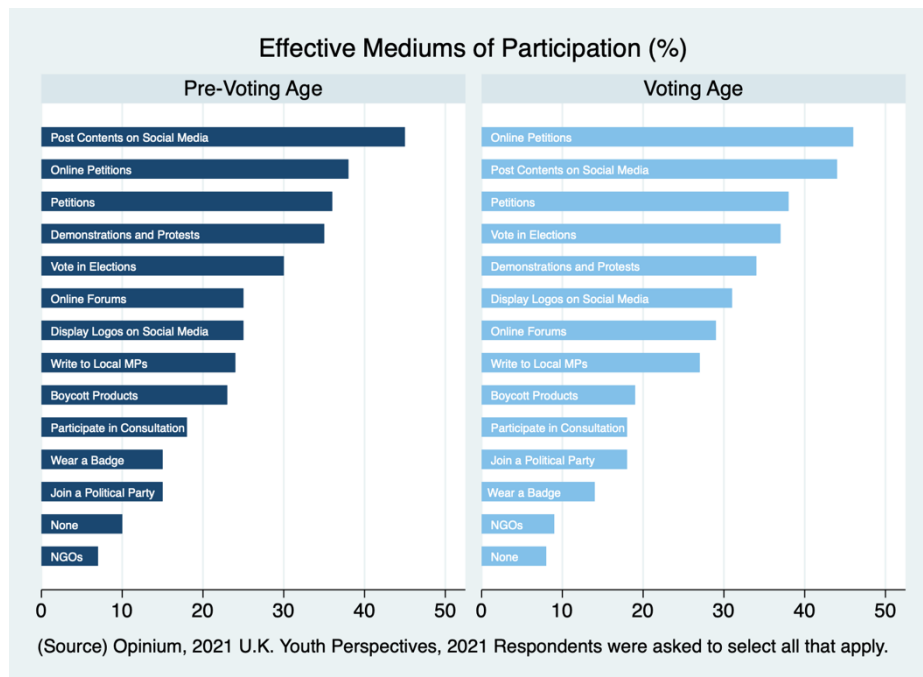
[78] John B. Holbein and D. Sunshine Hillygus, *Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 11.

[79] Anita Harris, Johanna Wyn, and Salem Younes, 'Beyond Apathetic or Activist Youth: "Ordinary" Young People and Contemporary Forms of Participation,' *YOUNG* 18, no. 1 (February 2010): 9–32, https://doi.org/10.1177/110330880901800103.

[80] Emily Rainsford, 'Exploring Youth Political Activism in the United Kingdom: What Makes Young People Politically Active in Different Organisations?,' *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 4 (November 2017): 791, https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148117728666.

[81] Mark Hooghe, 'Political Socialization and the Future of Politics,' *Acta Politica* 39 (2004): 331–41, https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500082.

These findings suggest that online platforms and participatory opportunities should be explored further to engage young people in the G7 countries and beyond. As an information and communication tool, the internet may play a democratising role by enhancing participatory opportunities through which young people are not only passive consumers of information, but become producers of contents and ideas.[82] However, in order to design meaningful participatory opportunities for youth, enthusiasm for online participation needs to be moderated by consideration and mitigation of associated risks. While some hail online mediums as mobilisation tools for motivating young people to participate in more activities offline, there is mixed evidence of causal impact of social media on political participation.[83] Salutary equalising and democratising effects may be limited, as those who engage in online activities may already be inclined to participate offline.[84]

Crucially, it must be recognised that online participation cannot be a 'panacea for offline inequalities of representation' among youth.[85] Instead of subsuming all young people under the banner of a 'digital generation', the risks of new divisions (including inequality in access to/the quality of digital tools, and other means by which offline inequalities might be reproduced online) must be considered to leverage the democratising potential of the ICT-led transformations.[86] Indeed, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore of the extent of the persisting 'digital divide' in the G7 countries.[87] Reviewing the increased use of online tools for democratic participation, Simon et al. caution against an excessively mechanistic assumption that digital tools are corrective for democratic deficits.[88] Online and offline participation do not occur in isolation, and they are complementary only when leveraged effectively.[89] It must be recognised that targeted outreach and contacts still underpin the successful broadening and deepening of democratic participation through online platforms.[90] The principle for effective online participation is ultimately the same for any other participatory exercise – it will only succeed if it is truly valued by people for its impact and effectiveness.[91]

Youth Interest in Participation in the G7 Democracies

Overall, the burgeoning research findings reflect somewhat ambivalent attitudes of the contemporary youth towards political participation. Young people today are simultaneously repudiated as 'harbingers of the crisis of democracy' *and* commended as 'pioneers of new mediums of politics'.[92] Although evidence is not conclusive, attitudinal data on young people from International Survey of Youth Attitude in 2018[93] suggests that there is an appetite for participation among young people. According to the survey, a significant majority of youth express their interest in participation with a notable exception of Japan. Overall, 63.0% of young people indicated that they want to be involved in resolving social issues for the betterment of society, and 55.6% said that they want to proactively participate in the decision-making in their respective country.

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[82] Aaron J Martin, *Young People and Politics: Political Engagement in the Anglo-American Democracies*, 113-5.

[83] Shelley Boulianne, 'Social Media Use and Participation: A Meta-Analysis of Current Research', *Information, Communication & Society* 18, no. 5 (4 May 2015): 524–38, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1008542.

[84] Michael Xenos, Ariadne Vromen, and Brian D. Loader, 'The Great Equalizer? Patterns of Social Media Use and Youth Political Engagement in Three Advanced Democracies', *Information, Communication & Society* 17, no. 2 (7 February 2014): 151–67, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318.

[85] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 31.

[86] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 165 .

[87] OECD, *OECD Digital Economy Outlook 2020* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), 13, https://doi.org/10.1787/bb167041-en.

[88] Julie Simon et al., 'Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement' (Report, Nesta, 2017), 4, https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/digital_democracy.pdf.

[89] Shakuntala Banaji and David Buckingham, *The Civic Web: Young People, the Internet and Civic Participation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013),159.

[90] Simon et al., 'Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement,' 5.
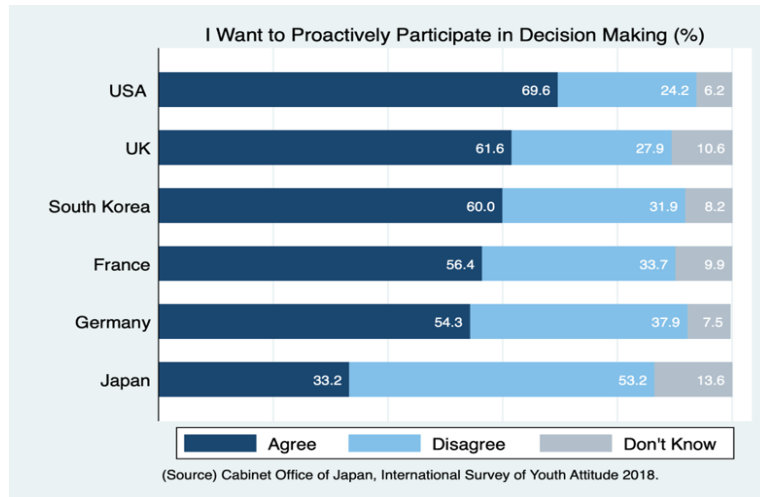
[91] Simon et al, 'Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement,' 67.

[92] Rys Farthing, 'The Politics of Youthful Antipolitics: Representing the "Issue" of Youth Participation in Politics,' *Journal of Youth Studies* 13, no. 2 (April 2010): 181, https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260903233696.

[93] The data for this secondary analysis, "International Survey of Youth Attitude 2018, Cabinet Office of Japan," was provided by the Social Science Japan Data Archive, Center for Social Research and Data Archives, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.
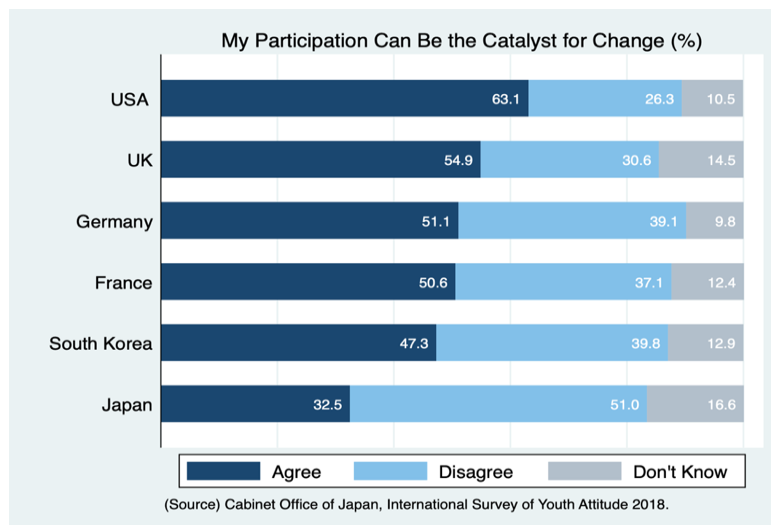
Figure 9.

I Want to Proactively Participate in Decision Making (%)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
USA	69.6	24.2	6.2
UK	61.6	27.9	10.6
South Korea	60.0	31.9	8.2
France	56.4	33.7	9.9
Germany	54.3	37.9	7.5
Japan	33.2	53.2	13.6

(Source) Cabinet Office of Japan, International Survey of Youth Attitude 2018.

Moreover, although a majority (57.1%) of respondents felt that they do not have the power to influence government decisions as an individual, almost half of the respondents (49.7%) believed in their political efficacy, indicating that their participation could be a catalyst for a change in social phenomena they want to bring about.

Figure 10.

My Participation Can Be the Catalyst for Change (%)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
USA	63.1	26.3	10.5
UK	54.9	30.6	14.5
Germany	51.1	39.1	9.8
France	50.6	37.1	12.4
South Korea	47.3	39.8	12.9
Japan	32.5	51.0	16.6

(Source) Cabinet Office of Japan, International Survey of Youth Attitude 2018.

Relatedly, research on youth participation also points to a paradox – young people are most distrustful of existing political systems, and yet, they often hold the most idealistic and ambitious views about what can be achieved in democracies.[94] A finding from the UK suggests that young people aged between 18 and 34 years old are most likely to think that their participation is effective, even though they are least likely to participate in political activities in practice.[95] These findings suggest that participatory opportunities for youth need to improve, both in terms of their content and design, to harness the revitalising potential of youth in the G7 democracies.

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[94] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 8.

[95] Elise Uberoi and Neil Johnston, *Political Disengagement in the UK: Who Is Disengaged?*, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, 7501, 2021, 12, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7501/CBP-7501.pdf.

Participatory and Deliberative Turn of Democracy

Whilst the G7 countries have shared history and democratic values, it must be noted that democracy continues to evolve, and its essence defies unequivocal interpretation.[96] To continue championing democratic values across future generations, G7 leaders need to acknowledge the changing nature of democracy and its ideational underpinnings. In this context, a participatory model of democracy gained prominence through its rejection of 'minimalist' democratic theory, in which the values of citizens' participation was understood to be procedurally limited to voting in elections.[97] In this theorisation, participation is hailed as a school of democracy, simultaneously shaping and empowering citizenship.[98] Pateman, one of the most prominent proponents of participatory democracy, stresses the need for the 'democratisation of democracies'[99] through substantive participation beyond elections and the formal political realm. In light of the proliferation of participatory measures around the world, whether substantive participation is possible appears to be less a question about its practical viability than the matter of political will.[100]

More recently, theories of democracy took another turn – towards a deliberative model of democracy, premised upon open and well-facilitated discussions on public matters.[101] Developed as a means to address the shortcomings of representative democracy and its majoritarian principle, the deliberative model values the communicative process and the possibility for exchanges of opinions and interactions with different viewpoints, in response to which the previously held opinions can be reciprocally transformed.[102] Notwithstanding the crucial normative and practical differences in participatory and deliberative models of democracy, some argue that these two frameworks of democracy can profit from each other, effectively advocating a model of 'participatory deliberative democracy'.[103] By considering deliberation as an important form of participation, and by enhancing the inclusivity of deliberative mechanisms, these two models can be complementary.[104] While participation and deliberation should not be overly romanticised – as Dahl argues, participation is not always seen as worthwhile or rewarding by citizens[105] – there are ample examples demonstrating values of participation for both governments as well as citizens, given adequate opportunities and incentives.

As a group of established democracies, G7 leaders have the opportunity to exchange ideas and draw lessons from democratic innovations through participatory and deliberative means emanating from across D11 countries. For instance, participatory budgeting, through which citizens participate in the budgetary planning of municipalities, gained traction and expanded in scope over the years.[106] From Ardèche in France[107] to Boston in the United States,[108] such mechanisms have also been extended to youth participatory budgeting, with an aim to instil future-oriented thinking in cities' budgeting processes. Furthermore, technological transformations are redefining the rules of participatory opportunities, instituting 'digital democracy'. Building on burgeoning empirical insights of the benefit of the deliberative measures, a prototype platform of online deliberation by the Centre for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University combines video-conferencing and new technology emulating the role of moderators in typical

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[96] Pierre Rosanvallon and Samuel Moyn, *Democracy Past and Future: Selected Essays* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 37.

[97] Carole Pateman, 'Participatory Democracy Revisited,' *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (March 2012): 7–19, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592711004877.

[98] Donatella Della Porta, *Can Democracy Be Saved? Participation, Deliberation and Social Movements* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 15.

[99] Carole Pateman, 'Participatory Democracy Revisited,' *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (March 2012): 15, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592711004877.

[100] Pateman, 'Participatory Democracy Revisited,' 15.

[101] Claudia Chwalisz, 'A New Wave of Deliberative Democracy,' *Carnegie Europe*, November 26, 2019, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2019/11/26/new-wave-of-deliberative-democracy-pub-80422.

[102] Della Porta, *Can Democracy Be Saved?*, 18.

[103] Stephen Elstub, 'Deliberative and Participatory Democracy,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Andre Bächtiger et al. (Oxford University Press, 2018), 194, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198747369.013.5.

[104] Elstub, 'Deliberative and Participatory Democracy,' 192-194.

[105] Dahl, 'A Democratic Paradox?,' 39.

[106] Pateman, 'Participatory Democracy Revisited,' 7-8.

[107] International Observatory on Participatory Democracy, 'Youth Participatory Budgeting in Ardèche, France,' accessed March 10, 2021, https://oidp.net/en/practice.php?id=1288.

[108] International Observatory on Participatory Democracy, 'Boston Youth Participatory Budgeting,' accessed March 10, 2021, https://oidp.net/en/practice.php?id=320.

deliberative processes. [109] Through leveraging technological advances, it aims to allow citizens to self-moderate, and ultimately to expand the deliberative opportunities to the wider public. [110]

Importantly, as evidence and statistics feature more heavily in daily language amidst the global pandemic, participatory and deliberative measures can 'democratise' evidence-based decision making. Deliberation is particularly suitable for making decisions that entail value-based judgements with trade-off and long-term impact [111] – and the policy planning for the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is the epitome of such occasion. In fact, there are historical examples of public deliberative measures taken to laudable effects in response to the outbreak of pandemic, such as Australia's FluViews which consulted the public on their views on policies and scenarios in response to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). [112] The deliberative forum based on available evidence allowed for relevant policy recommendations, including the communication strategy during a period of uncertainty. [113]

Although the majority of these participatory and deliberative initiatives remain ad-hoc and sporadic in nature, lacking in established mechanisms, [114] there are notable exceptions of 14 institutionalised mechanisms (as of 2020), [115] and it is increasingly recognised that these opportunities can be meaningfully deployed in varying contexts. [116] Some of the G7 countries have already established institutionalised mechanisms that require the public bodies to consult the citizens under predetermined conditions. [117] For instance, France has introduced a requirement to organise forums for citizen deliberation for amendments in the bioethics law, [118] and launched a national consultation through a dedicated website and citizen committees. [119] Similarly, the UK's Sciencewise supports public authorities to hold deliberation programs on the issues pertaining to developments in science and technology, with track record of over 50 projects. [120] India's constitutional amendment instituting *gram sabhas* – regular public meetings in villages bringing citizens together for deliberation to select participants to benefit programs [121] – is yet another illustrative example. These regular forums provide voice and agency to the people who may have otherwise been disenfranchised from public discussions. [122] As Rao and Sanyal contend, equality in voice and agency in participation require policymakers' attention, as much as inequality in other economic opportunities. [123]

Rather than juxtaposing participatory and deliberative models of democracy as direct alternatives to institutions of representative democracy, it would be fruitful for G7 leaders to consider how these democratic innovations can supplement representative democracy in different contexts. [124] In particular, combining the insight of young people's preference for non-institutionalised means of participation with democratic innovations across the G7 and D11 countries may prove instrumental in catalysing youth participation. If G7 leaders are to meet the demands of global

[109] James Fishkin et al., 'Deliberative Democracy with the Online Deliberation Platform' (Stanford Center for Deliberative Democracy, 2019), https://cdd.stanford.edu/mm/2019/11/fishkin-hc-platform.pdf.

[110] Ibid.

[111] OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/innovative-citizen-participation-new-democratic-institutions-catching-the-deliberative-wave-highlights.pdf, 3.

[112] Anna Hopkins, Ben Rickey, and Pippa Coutts, 'Evidence Use in Mini Publics Eight Case Studies' (London: Alliance for Useful Evidence, 2019), 9, https://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/assets/2019/01/Evidence-vs-Democracy-eight-case-studies.pdf.

[113] Wendy A. Rogers et al., 'Pandemic Influenza Communication: Views from a Deliberative Forum', *Health Expectations* 12, no. 3 (September 2009): 331–338, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1369-7625.2009.00562.x.

[114] OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, 35.

[115] ibid.

[116] Nicole Curato et al., 'Twelve Key Findings in Deliberative Democracy Research,' *Daedalus* 146, no. 3 (July 2017): 34, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00444.

[117] OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, 39.

[118] ibid.

[119] United Nations Educational, *Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Bioethics Committees and Public Engagement*, 2019, 50-51, https://www.ccne-ethique.fr/sites/default/files/1098_19_guide_5_bioethics_committees_public_engagement_int_web.pdf.

[120] 'About Sciencewise,' Sciencewise, accessed May 19, 2021, https://sciencewise.org.uk/about-sciencewise/.

[121] Vijayendra Rao and Paromita Sanyal, 'Dignity through Discourse: Poverty and the Culture of Deliberation in Indian Village Democracies', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629, no. 1 (May 2010): 146–147, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716209357402.

[122] Rao and Sanyal, 168.

[123] ibid.

[124] Archon Fung, 'Democratizing the Policy Process.' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. Michael Moran, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 683.

and long-term challenges, input and experience of citizens need to be channelled through participation and deliberation.[125] That is perhaps, as Elstub argues, how we may continue to sustain our democratic values.[126]

Section 2 Summary

Young people want participation in different ways to their predecessors, and there is a decisive trend of preference for non-institutionalised participation in politics among youth. While the declining participation in formal politics – most notably in voting – is a grave concern, new forms of participation should be harnessed, rather than condemned, in order to engage youth in meaningful participation. Participatory and deliberative models of democracy, along with the empirical insights of democratic innovations emanating from across G7 and D11 countries, provide guidance as to how participatory opportunities for youth should be designed to bolster and deepen our democracies.

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[125] Della Porta, *Can Democracy Be Saved?*, 197.
[126] Elstub, 'Deliberative and Participatory Democracy,' 199.

Section 3. Towards Exemplary Youth Participation

Normative Importance of Youth Participation

Across the globe, youth participation is increasingly endorsed as a fundamental right, as well as a desideratum for effective design, implementation and appraisal of policies. The decades following the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[127] in 1989 – explicitly recognising young people's right to participate and to influence the decision-making – saw an efflorescence of initiatives aimed at engaging youth and enhancing their participatory opportunities. Indeed, the establishment of the Youth-7 (Y7) as one of the engagement groups for the G-summitry since 2011 epitomises such recognition. For governments across the world, promoting youth participation is acknowledged as an important end in itself, but it is also a means for better policy formulation and personal development opportunities for youth.[128] The ever-expanding landscape for participation[129] as well as a shift towards conceptualisation of youth as partners, rather than passive beneficiaries – reflected, for instance, in Youth2030 strategy to work with and for youth[130] – offers optimism and guidance for youth participation in G7 countries and beyond.

Key Considerations for Youth Participation in the G7 and beyond

While recognising the normative importance of youth participation is immensely valuable, youth participation is far more than a sorry corrective for youth disillusionment. High quality participation requires a rethinking of youth participation, not just in terms of the mere number of attendees or initiatives, but also its substance and the tangible impact it brings.[131] In light of this consideration, a simplistic assumption of 'more participation, more democracy'[132] is untenable. Furthermore, the expansion of initiatives and frameworks of youth engagement have brought to the fore the hitherto largely implicit and unacknowledged assumptions, that increased participation is universally desirable.[133] Instead, youth participation is not always intrinsically good in and of itself.[134] While the existing opportunities and strategies to engage youth are profoundly important, many scholars lament its limited impact due to the paucity of evaluative and feedback processes.[135] Farthing further highlights the need for considering why youth participation is desirable in different contexts in the first place – without which the rhetoric of youth engagement is reduced to a revered but unanalysed 'act of faith'.[136] There are key challenges and issues that must be addressed and considered to design meaningful participatory opportunities for youth. It is to this critical reflection that we now turn.

Inequality in Participatory Resources and Exclusion

Opportunities for participation and deliberation in political processes are naturally exposed to self-selection bias, with more educated people from certain socio-economic backgrounds more prone to participate.[137] This recognition is even more salient when acknowledging the multidimensional nature of participation.[138] Without concomitant considerations for inequality of resources – whether it is to do with time, knowledge or other assets[139] – blindly increasing participatory opportunities might simply reinforce this inequality. Even more worrisome, Verba and Nie

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[127] 'OHCHR | Convention on the Rights of the Child,' United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx.

[128] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2016, 14.*

[129] See for instance, https://www.youthpolicy.org/structures/ for existing structures of international and regional youth participation.

[130] The United Nations, *Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People*, 2018, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf.

[131] Barry Checkoway, 'What Is Youth Participation?,' *Children and Youth Services Review* 33, no. 2 (February 2011): 340–45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017.

[132] Garaint Parry and George Moyser, 'More Participation, More Democracy?,' 44.

[133] Rys Farthing, 'Why Youth Participation? Some Justifications and Critiques of Youth Participation Using New Labour's Youth Policies as a Case Study', *Youth and Policy*, no. 109 (2012), https://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/farthing_why_youth_participation.pdf.

[134] Tomi Kiilakoski, 'Perspectives on Youth Participation', *Youth Partnership*' (Analytical Paper, European Union and Council of Europe, 2020), 25, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/59895423/Kiilakoski_Participation_Analytical_Paper_final%252005-05.pdf/b7b77c27-5bc3-5a90-594b-a18d253b7e67.

[135] E. Kay M. Tisdall and John Davis, 'Making a Difference? Bringing Children's and Young People's Views into Policy-Making', *Children & Society* 18, no. 2 (April 2004): 131–42, https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.816.

[136] Farthing, 'Why Youth Participation? Some Justifications and Critiques of Youth Participation Using New Labour's Youth Policies as a Case Study,' 72.

[137] Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*, 163.

[138] Parry and Moyser, 'More Participation, More Democracy?,' 54.

[139] Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman, 'Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation,' *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 2 (June 1995): 271–94, https://doi.org/10.2307/2082425.

contend that it might even exacerbate this inequality, not only by favouring the already advantaged to participate and influence policy-making, but by allowing them to influence more effectively.[140] Accessible and less resource-intensive mediums such as online participation are not immune to this risk. Crucially, structural exclusion and self-chosen non-participation must be differentiated.[141] In studies of civic and political participation, it is often found that whether or not a person is asked to participate is, among other determinants, one of the strongest predictor of participation.[142] Correcting inequality in participation need not be a grandiose venture – it may simply begin with asking more people to participate and providing them with the means and incentives to do so effectively.

Assumption of Homogeneity

Ultimately, age group is but one social category. While commonalities and shared experiences of youth are important, the term 'youth' should not be used merely as a substitutive term for masking other (perhaps more divisive) categories; such an essentialist notion does more to obscure than to elucidate the divergent and distinct issues different groups of youth face today.[143] In addition, as was noted in the UN's World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), definitions of youth vary across places, and change in response to social and political contexts.[144] An approach to youth as a 'social process' – expanding the age-related understanding of youth and situating it within the social and institutional contexts in which 'youth' is given a particular meaning[145] – serves as a useful reminder to consider the varied circumstances and challenges young people face, and to meaningfully draw on their views and experiences.

Power and Lack of Impact

Many participatory initiatives are led by those already in power instead of being youth-driven – and therein lies the danger of tokenistic uses of youth participation.[146] In spite of the blossoming of youth initiatives, there is a pervasive sense that young people are essentially invisible in substance.[147] Indeed, some see participation as at best a mere window dressing and at worst a hegemonic tool of control within the existing power structure.[148] Multi-stakeholderism and dialogues through citizen engagement have become more common place, but young people and citizens at large are typically excluded from agenda-setting processes.[149] For instance, young people need more than just a mere presence at international conferences, and valuable opportunities for young people such as the Youth Forum by the United Nations do not automatically lead to their meaningful participation, as the underlying power relations and formal cultures may limit young people's abilities to influence.[150] Ultimately, it must be recognised that equality of presence does not always equate to substantive equality of participants' voice being heard.[151]

If older contemporaries dominate the decision-making power over determining what 'youth' is and what mediums of participation are available, inadvertently or otherwise, youth participation may simply reinforce the very issues and structural underrepresentation it seeks to address.[152] Such tokenistic participation might not only hinder the effectiveness of participation and deliberation, but also runs the risk of further youth disengagement and discouragement. While increasing recognition of the importance of inclusivity in participation is welcomed, Percy-

[140] Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[141] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life.*

[142] Cliff Zukin et al., *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 205.

[143] Mayssoun Sukarieh and Stuart Tannock, *Youth Rising? The Politics of Youth in the Global Economy*, Critical Youth Studies (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 5.

[144] The United Nations, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf.

[145] Johanna Wyn, *Rethinking Youth* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 8-10.

[146] Jennie Fleming, 'Young People's Participation - Where Next?', *Children & Society*, April 2012, n/a-n/a, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2012.00442.x.

[147] Sukarieh and Tannock, *Youth Rising?*, 3.

[148] Harry Taylor, 'Insights into Participation from Critical Management and Labour Process Perspective' in eds. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, eds., *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2001).

[149] Cammaerts, *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 193.

[150] Soo Ah Kwon, 'The Politics of Global Youth Participation', *Journal of Youth Studies* 22, no. 7 (9 August 2019): 926–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2018.1559282.

[151] Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*, 163.

[152] Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (London: Palgrave McMillan), cited in Farthing, 'Why Youth Participation? Some Justifications and Critiques of Youth Participation Using New Labour's Youth Policies as a Case Study,' 78-9.

Smith argues that attention needs to be paid to the broader contexts in which participation occurs and stresses the need for more reflexive relationships between youth and older generation.[153] Online and offline, young people are told to have their say, but without being listened to.[154] In other words, youth need to be able to make a genuine difference, and there is a danger of further frustration if young people are given a voice only to realise that decisionmakers are not actively listening to them.[155]

Lack of Development Opportunities

Civic and educational effects of participation have long been lauded.[156] It is through participation that citizens recognise how their seemingly private concerns shape, and are in turn shaped by, public matters.[157] **However, political equality of agency and voice upon which democracies are predicated remain an abstract principle to many, and is rarely substantiated with concrete experience of self-efficacy.[158]** In order to address the concerns for exclusion and lack of impact, participatory opportunities crucially need to foster a sense of efficacy and development of skills among citizens, including young people. Concrete experiences of civic participation are particularly relevant for youth, as experiences during early years of life are formative of values.[159] Without development and mobilisation of skills in young people, attempts made to harness young people's energy and ideas are unlikely to be successful.

A Way Forward : Case Study of the Y7

The U.K Government is supporting six official Engagement Groups for the G7 2021, including the Youth 7 (Y7). Hosted by the Future Leaders Network this year, the Y7's purpose is to bring together leaders aged 18 – 30 from across the G7 member countries, who, over the course of several months, develop policy recommendations for G7 world leaders. The Engagement Groups are offered frequent, meaningful interactions with Government officials, G7 Ministers and on occasion world leaders, ensuring their voice is heard throughout the G7 process.

The Y7 2021 has been youth-led from its outset. In 2020, a group of 8 young people from across the U.K. came together over a 3 month period to recommend a structure for the Y7 process. They recommended three core pillars to the Y7 work, each of which directly relate to best practice in youth participation:

INCLUSION

It is crucially important to recognise the heterogeneity of lived experiences of youth today.[160] As such, best practice for youth participation is not only to acknowledge the diversity of youth, but also understand the barriers to participation for certain groups, and strive to remove such barriers.[161] The Y7 deployed a number of methods for different youth voices to be heard:

- The Y7 process was youth-led, consisting of a Taskforce of young people all under the age of 30;
- A Youth Forum was introduced, to bring the voices of young people with lived experience of the policy areas under discussion into the process, instead of simply relying upon policy competence and/or research to bring these voices forward;

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[153] Barry Percy-Smith, 'From Consultation to Social Learning in Community Participation with Young People,' *Children, Youth and Environments* 16, no. 2 (2006): 153–79.

[154] Banaji and Buckingham, *The Civic Web*, 160.

[155] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 5.

[156] Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, 337.

[157] Pitkin, 'Representation and Democracy,' 340.

[158] Nick Bromell, 'Freedom Reigns: But it isn't enough,' Boston Review(March–April 2006), www.bostonreview.net/BR31.2/bromell.html., cited in Peter Levine, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the next Generation of American Citizens* (Medford, Mass. : Hanover, NH: Tufts University Press ; University Press of New England, 2007), 26.

[159] Levine, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*, 137.

[160] OECD, *Engaging Young People in Open Government A Communication Guide* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019), 3, https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Young-people-in-OG.pdf.

[161] Cammaerts et al., *Youth Participation in Democratic Life*, 193.

- All Y7 participants were required to undertake public consultation, to understand the true barriers young people were facing in the world which needed raising to world leaders. Collectively, 10,000 young people across the G7 were consulted through the Y7 2021;

- The Y7 Presidency hosted a National Conversation of 200 young people (termed 'Ambassadors') who were trained to speak to their friends, families, peers, colleagues in their community about the G7, Y7 and the potential impact of the decisions made at these meetings on their lives, bringing young people who ordinarily wouldn't engage in the G7 or democratic process into the conversation. Collectively, over 2,000 young people across all four nations of the United Kingdom discussed the G7 and its impact on their lives.

IMPACT

It is worth reiterating that a large number of young people in the UK stated that democracy is not just about 'having a say' - it is about *'being heard'*. If democracy is about *everyone* having a stake in it, citizens should be empowered to shape the agenda when it is appropriate for the context, as opposed to simply responding to the pre-determined set of issues. While it may seem blatantly obvious, the fact that 'young people are experts on being young'[162] should not be forgotten amidst the talks of youth apathy and political alienation. To this end, the Y7 2021:

- Enabled the Y7 participants to set the agenda – within four broad themes of 'Climate and the Environment, Digital and Technology, Economy and Health' the delegates were asked to select the three priority areas that they felt were most relevant to youth. This led to, for example, the selection of mental health as a priority within the Health track - despite the fact that it played no role in the G7 Presidency agenda. The Y7 2021 can be largely credited for the mention of mental health in the G7 Health Ministers' declaration and there is hope that this issue will also be raised in the Leaders' Declaration to shortly be produced;

- Fostered positive relationships between civil servants and youth representatives, ensuring the youth voice was fed in at the most opportune moments and considered during decision making processes;

- Deployed the use of 'youth allies' to champion and amplify the youth voice, in the form of influential industry experts (known as 'Track Counsellors') who were able to galvanise media and political attention.

DEVELOPMENT

As argued by participatory democrats, meaningful participation can foster a sense of political efficacy and may lead to more engaged citizenry.[163] While learning opportunities through participation are immense, such opportunities should be supplemented with activities targeted at skill development and knowledge building, without which some young people would continue to be marginalised. To this end, the Y7 2021:

- Hosted, over the period of 14 weeks, bespoke training and skills development sessions, to build capacity in the participants for the challenges they were expected to meet;

- Required all youth participants to deliver a Post-Summit Initiative – a youth-led piece of personal, local, societal or national piece of change that the young people would be responsible for delivering.

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[162] Checkoway, 'What Is Youth Participation?,' 341.
[163] Held, *Models of Democracy*, 212 .

Key Challenges

Lack of Institutionalisation and the G7 Structure

While the informality of the G7 processes accords flexibility, the G7's lack of formal institutionalisation has ramifications for its engagement with non-state actors, including the Y7, as the extent of engagement depends on the receptivity and willingness of each host country.[164] Importantly, the best practices of deliberative mechanisms are often easier to implement and follow if the initiatives are culturally institutionalised.[165] While institutionalised deliberation is not always the solution,[166] the G-summitry provides a suitable infrastructure within which to recognise the importance of civic space and insights provided by the engagement groups. While participatory opportunities can broaden the civic space and legitimacy of the G-summitry and its commitment to shared challenges, the efforts of the civil society are also necessarily constrained by the institutional design of the G-summitry itself. In highlighting the gap between celebrated rhetoric and practice of genuine engagement with civil society of the G-summitry, Chodor contends that the space civil society presently occupies within the G-summitry is characterised as 'participation without contestation'.[167] Further, it is argued that this shortcoming may be a result of purposeful choice, rather than a design flaw of the G-summitry to solicit support for decisions and agenda, while limiting the possibility of polarising contestation.[168]

Lack of Awareness and Recognition

Almost a half of young people aged between 18 and 34 years old do not know what the G7 is in the UK according to a YouGov-Cambridge survey, with a small minority of young people associating the G7 instead with a diet with daily breakfast of granola, mobile phone network, a consortium of Germany's 7 largest companies and a gathering of the world's largest religious groups. In addition, only around 1 in 5 young people expressed their confidence in the G7 to be able to solve shared international challenges. Perhaps unsurprisingly, confidence in the G7 was positively related to satisfaction with democracy, with a higher proportion of those satisfied with democracy expressing confidence (35%) compared to those dissatisfied with democracy (18%).

Cultural and Socialised Image of Youth

Too often, youth is treated as a period of 'political moratorium',[169] expecting political engagement to increase as young people come of age. These futurity discourses value young people for what they 'will' become, rather than for what they are and can contribute now.[170] In effect, young people are seen as 'apprentice-citizens',[171] as opposed to full-fledged citizens. While it must be acknowledged that young people today undergo a more fractured and uncertain transition into adulthood and financial independence,[172] these characterisations are barriers to perceiving young people as stakeholders. Checkoway stresses the importance of resisting such characterisation, as the adults' labelling of young people as problematic or apathetic leads young people to internalise these labels, and to doubt their self-legitimacy.[173] Instead, the particular difficulties faced by contemporary youth need to be better accounted for in their protracted period of 'waithood' between youth and adulthood.[174] In numerous aspects, the Y7 exemplifies youth leadership within the G7 processes, nurturing skills and providing opportunities for young people from different

[164] Hajnal, 'Civil Society and G8 Accountability,' in *Building Global Democracy?: Civil Society and Accountable Global Governance*, ed. Scholte, 200-201.

[165] OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions*, 35.

[166] OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, 7.

[167] Tom Chodor, 'The G20's Engagement with Civil Society: Participation without Contestation?,' *Globalizations* 17, no. 6 (17 August 2020): 903–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1702804.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Muxel, A, *L'expérience politique des jeunes* [the Political Experience of Young People], cited in Tom Chevalier, 'Political Trust, Young People and Institutions in Europe. A Multilevel Analysis', *International Journal of Social Welfare* 28, no. 4 (October 2019): 418, https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12380.

[170] Rob White, Johanna Wyn and Brady Robards, Youth and Society (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2017) cited in Helen Cahill and Babak Dadvand, 'Re-Conceptualising Youth Participation: A Framework to Inform Action,' *Children and Youth Services Review* 95 (December 2018): 244, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.11.001.

[171] David Owen, 'Dilemmas and Opportunities for the Young Active Citizen,' Youth Studies Australia 15, no.1 (1996), cited in Ellen Quintelier, 'Differences in Political Participation between Young and Old People', *Contemporary Politics* 13, no. 2 (June 2007): 166, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569770701562658.

[172] Deželan, 'Intergenerational Dialogue for Democracy,' 9.

[173] Checkoway, 'What Is Youth Participation?,' 342.

[174] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2016*, 14.

walks of life; and yet, youth leadership cannot be exercised in isolation[175] without formal recognition and cultural support of the societies at large.

Section 3 Summary

Designing meaningful participatory opportunities for youth in the G7 processes and domestic democratic processes requires ardent planning and facilitation. Thoughtful attention must be paid to its exclusionary risks, and structural barriers to impact and development at play. As a fundamental aspect of democracy, participatory opportunities across and within the G7 need to improve in a manner that harness, rather than further alienate, youth and their views. Exemplary youth participation engages youth in an inclusive manner, acknowledge their impact, and foster skills and sense of efficacy. In the context of international decision-making and governance, lack of awareness, access to decision-making processes and cultural acceptance remain key limitations for realising full revitalising potential of youth engagement. Exemplary youth participation is a *process* – it may begin with a formally imposed structure or a singularly isolated event, [176] but it needs to develop beyond them. Expanding well-designed participatory opportunities is not only normatively important for the G7 democracies – it can be instrumental in shaping a better future while championing democratic values.

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[175] Checkoway, 'What Is Youth Participation?,' 342.
[176] Kiilakoski, 'Perspectives on Youth Participation,' 21.

Section 4. Recommendations for the G7 leaders

Underneath the exclusivity and the prestige of the G7 lies a greater recognition for the need to enhance its democratic accountability – and in order to do so, the G7 countries need to live up to the rhetoric of shared democratic values. Ultimately, the G7's continued success and relevance is predicated upon world leaders' willingness and promptness with which to become more accountable to its citizens, and the global community more broadly.[177]

In light of these considerations, we recommend the G7 leaders to:

- **Negotiate a binding commitment to hold annual engagement group summits including the Y7**

  Allocate resources to underfunded engagement groups through a pool of funding from all the G7 countries to cover the operational costs and offer honorarium or non-monetary compensation to incentivise and remove barriers to inclusive participation;

  Ensure Y7 participation in high-level decision making processes as stakeholders, and increase transparency to the public by live-streaming relevant and appropriate Ministerial meetings;

  Increase awareness of the G7 processes and offer learning opportunities through Mock G7 programmes in schools and other promotional activities.

- **Appoint (and where a relevant bureau already exists, clarify the mandate and responsibility of) a Minister of Youth or a Secretariat dedicated to work with young people as partners**

  Coordinate and co-design participatory opportunities with youth in the G7 countries;

  Consider parliamentary quotas and other measures for youth to ensure representation of future generations

These complementary measures provide agency and voice to young people in the G7 countries and beyond. They are necessary to ensure that shared democratic values continue to be championed for years to come. The G7 democracies have the ability and the responsibility to 'look forward as well as back'[178] to represent the interests of young people and the future generations. The highly inclusive approach of the Y7 2021 should not remain an exception – engaging with youth to make decisions that shape our future is an important step forward towards building back better and restoring confidence in our democracies.

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[177] Hajnal, 'Civil Society and G8 Accountability,' in *Building Global Democracy?: Civil Society and Accountable Global Governance*, ed. Jan Aart Scholte, 185.

[178] Mónica Brito Vieira and David Runciman, *Representation* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2008), 183.

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