

Being young in Flanders. The main findings of the JOP-Monitor 2

Nicole Vettenburg, Johan Deklerck and Jessy Siongers

*The present text is the translation of the concluding Chapter 14 of the book *Young People in Facts and Figures. Findings of the JOP-Monitor 2* (p. 311-324)¹. The JOP-Monitor 2 was administered in 2008 as a postal survey among a representative sample of 12- to 30-year-olds in Flanders (N=3710).*

The Jeugdonderzoeksplatform (Youth Research Platform) (JOP) is an interdisciplinary interuniversity cooperation between the Youth and Prevention Research Group (K.U.Leuven), the Department of Social Welfare Studies (UGent), and the Tempus Omnia Revelat Research Group (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). The JOP was created in 2003 to address the need for a greater structural focus on youth research. It was set up on the initiative of the then Flemish minister for Internal Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service.² Since 2007, the JOP has been integrated into the Policy Research Centre for the "Culture, Youth and Sport" theme.

1. Introduction

In the fall of 2008, the JOP-Monitor 2 was administered to 12- to 30-year-olds in Flanders. The thirteen chapters of the book *Young People in Facts and Figures* provide an extensive description of our findings in the following themes: employment, (family) relationships, school, leisure, social life, media, life course, democratic citizenship, well-being, fear of crime, tolerance and delinquency. In addition to general descriptive analyses, differences in terms of gender, age and educational level were examined within every theme. These results were systematically compared with the findings from the JOP-Monitor 1 (Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave, 2007).

¹ The full reference of the book: Vettenburg, N., Deklerck, J. & Siongers, J. (eds.) (2010). *Jongeren in cijfers en letters. Bevindingen uit de JOP-monitor 2*. Leuven: Acco.

² The supervisors of the JOP are: J. Deklerck, since 2010 replaced by J. Put (K.U.Leuven), M. Elchardus (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and N. Vettenburg (UGent). Coordination is ensured by the Department of Social Welfare Studies, UGent. The core mission of the JOP consists of two activities: a systematic analysis of existing research in Flanders, and the development of recurrent measurements for charting young people's social world and its evolution. In order to analyse Flemish research, youth research is inventoried and synthesised within the JOP. For each finished study, a detailed research form containing all the relevant information is drawn up. These forms are made available online on the JOP website www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be – for English summaries, see: www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/eng/index – and constitute the basis for the syntheses. At the beginning of 2006, a first synthesis was published as a book entitled *Jongeren van nu en straks* ("Young People Now and Later" - Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave, 2006); in *Jongeren binnenstebuiten* ("Young People Inside Out" - Vettenburg, Deklerck, Siongers, 2009), the research forms and the data from the JOP-Monitor 1 were used.

This summary of the findings is structured around the following dimensions: conditions, convictions and conduct.

2. Conditions

The first part gives a synthetic view of the objective living conditions of 12- to 30-year-olds in Flanders.

2.1. Living conditions

Virtually all young people younger than eighteen (N=1307) are still living in the parental home. After the age of eighteen, they gradually leave their parents' home, boys somewhat later than girls. Moreover, students keep "lingering" at home, until they finish their studies. Overall, these findings correspond with those from the JOP-Monitor 1. In the group of young people still living at home, almost one quarter (23.4%) has been confronted with the divorce of their parents.

6% of young people leave the parental home between the ages of 18 and 21. In the group of 22- to 25-year-olds, almost 60% still live at home; among the 26- to 30-year-olds, this is still 17%. The hinge age is around 25 years. Among the 18- to 30-year-olds, more boys than girls are still living at home, and the younger they are, the more likely they are to be still living with their parents. Having limited financial means increases the likelihood of young people staying in the parental home. Education level also plays a role, but to a lesser extent. It is mainly young people who have no secondary-education diploma who are staying at home longer.

On average, boys move in with their partner around the age of 23, girls around the age of 22. The average age at which the men in our sample have their first child, is 25.6 years; for women this is 24.2 years. Since our sample consisted only of people of 30 years old or younger, it is obvious that we cannot extrapolate our findings to the average age at which Flemish people have their first child.

2.2. Continued education and social background

Among the 18- to 30-year-olds who continue studying after completing secondary education in Flanders, 65% study at a college and 36% at university. Both at college and at university, the student population appears to be equally divided over boys and girls.

We examined the likelihood of continued education in relation to the parents' level of education, the parents' employment situation, and the combination of both factors. 84% of the young people whose parents are highly-skilled enrolls in higher education. This percentage is much lower for young people whose parents are lower-skilled: only 44% enrolls in college or university. 4% of the children of two-income families continue studying, whilst of children whose parents are both unemployed, only 39% enrolls in higher education. We next combined the parents' level of education and the parents' employment situation. When both parents are highly educated and both have a job, 85%

of the children continue studying, whilst only 37% of children from families in which only one parent has a job and neither parent has a higher level of education continue studying. Among the young people who continue studying, we perceive a similar trend in the choice between college or university: university is chosen more frequently in families with two higher-skilled and working parents (54%) than in families with lower-skilled parents only one of which has a job (46%).

Children from socially stronger environments are thus more likely to choose university over college than children from socially weaker environments. These results correspond with the findings from the JOP-Monitor 1 and those from previous research. The findings from the JOP-Monitor 2 confirm a stagnation in the democratisation of higher education in most western countries. A more resolute choice for an egalitarian approach linking the right to education to human dignity could enhance the democratisation process.

2.3. Employment situation

In the group of young people past school age, one third is taking a training. The likelihood that young people continue studying is greater among pupils in general secondary education, secondary arts education and technical secondary education, and with pupils who have at least one parent who has had secondary education.

Most young people past school age have a job (89%), whilst a small group (5%) is unemployed. Having a job is closely related to age, gender and level of education. More older than younger respondents, more men than women, and more young people with a higher education degree than young people with a secondary education diploma or without a diploma, have a job. More boys than girls leave secondary education without a diploma; of the unqualified dropouts, 21% are unemployed.

A logistic regression analysis for 18- to 30-year-olds who do not go to school reveals the following factors as predictors of joblessness: having no secondary education diploma, being young, and being female. Further analyses showed that the parents' level of education and parental employment situation appear not to have any effect, but that having a negative view of the future is related to being jobless: young people whose perception of the future is rather negative are less likely to have a job. This correlation evidently operates in two directions.

2.4. Leisure activities

The most frequent leisure activities of 14- to 30-year-olds are: using Internet applications (e.g. surfing the Web, checking or sending e-mails), doing household chores, doing things together with the family or the partner, doing homework or studying. Among the 12- to 13-year-olds these activities are: watching television, doing homework, listening to music. In addition, young people's leisure activities show gender-related patterns. Among the 14- to 17-year-olds, more boys than girls engage in gaming, doing odd jobs and sports, and more girls than boys help in the household and go shopping.

A factor analysis revealed five dimensions in leisure activities: "going out", "digital leisure", "household activities", "sports" (not necessarily active sports), and "games and cultural activities". These dimensions varied according to age: more 14- to 17-year-olds engage in sports and games, more 18- to 21-year-olds go out, slightly more 22- to 25-year-olds e-mail and surf the Web, and more 26- to 30-year-olds perform household chores. Pupils in general secondary education engage more in digital and cultural activities than pupils in vocational or technical secondary education; more pupils in vocational and technical secondary education engage in sports and games; more pupils in technical secondary education than in general and vocational secondary education go out. Among the 18- to 30-year-olds who are still living at home, the cultural dimension is more apparent among men and among young people whose two parents have a job. Digital leisure activities are more prevalent among the highly-skilled, whilst household activities are preponderant among women, the older age brackets and young people with a lower SES as a result of parental education. The sports and games dimension scores well among men and the lower-skilled. The younger age bracket, young people having more financial means and men score higher on going out. Leisure activities are somewhat different among young people who are still living with their parents than among those living autonomously; in the latter group, however, there are differences between childless young adults and young parents.

These findings are hardly surprising and are in line with findings from the JOP-Monitor 1. The differences among young people increase with age, and it is likely that young people are often approached increasingly based on these differences. The differentiated approach to youth work is a good example of this. Youth work is being differentiated in order to address young people in their full diversity. At the same time, this tendency confirms and perhaps even reinforces differences among young people.

2.5. Having a girlfriend/boyfriend

Of the 12- to 18-year-olds, about one in five respondents currently has a girlfriend/boyfriend. About half of those who currently do not have a girlfriend/boyfriend say they have never had a relationship before. Among minors, more girls than boys are having a relationship; as their age increases, so does the likelihood of a relationship. In vocational secondary education, more pupils have a girlfriend/boyfriend than in technical and general secondary education.

In the adult group, three out of ten young people currently have no relationship. In this group, three out of four say that they have already had a relationship. These findings are again similar to the findings from the JOP-Monitor 1.

3. Convictions

This part briefly describes young people's convictions. How do they feel at school? How good are their relationships with their parents and their teachers? How safe do they feel? What are their attitudes towards other cultures, politics, deviant behaviour? What are their media preferences? How do they view their ideal life course?

3.1. Family relationships

The relationship between young people and their parents was investigated by measuring their perception of their father's and their mother's responsiveness (i.e. their being receptive to their signals, needs and state) and how they perceive parental supervision. These three factors are highly interdependent.

Among the 12- to 18-year-olds, both parental responsiveness and supervision decrease with age. The father's responsiveness is slightly higher among boys than with girls; the mother's responsiveness and parental supervision differ according to the child's gender. Relatively more pupils in vocational secondary education say their mother is receptive to their signals and needs; more pupils in technical secondary education say their father is more receptive. Financial means play a limited yet significant role in parental supervision. The more limited the financial scope is, the less young people indicate parental supervision.

We cannot determine when parents are "sufficiently responsive", nor have we been able to assess whether parents exercise sufficient parental supervision over their children or whether this supervision is on the contrary inhibiting their children. It may well be that our findings are determined by contextual circumstances more than by parental characteristics.

3.2. School well-being

We can distinguish two dimensions in school well-being: school perception (satisfaction with the content of the education provided and satisfaction with one's school), and the relationships with the teachers/lecturers.

On the whole, school perception appears to be relatively positive: most young people are satisfied or highly satisfied with their education and their school. Students in higher education are somewhat more satisfied than pupils in secondary education. In secondary education, girls are more satisfied than boys; the correlation with the age of the young person is not consistent. In the first two years of secondary education, pupils in the A stream (general education) are more satisfied than pupils in the B stream (vocational-oriented); in higher years, there is no difference in school perception between pupils in vocational, technical and general secondary education. Repeating a grade in primary education has no effect on the school perception of pupils in secondary education. However, not having repeated in secondary education does lead to a more positive school perception. In higher education, more girls than boys have a positive school perception, whilst university students are more satisfied with the training and the institution itself than college students. Repeating in primary and/or secondary education does not correlate with students' school perception.

The multiple regression analyses show the mother's responsiveness to be the principal predictor of school perception in secondary education, whereas in higher education, the best predictor is type of education. In this case, being enrolled in university was

significantly correlated to a more positive school perception. Moreover, in higher education more than in secondary education, a positive view of the future and, to a lesser extent, a positive self-image appear to be good predictors of a positive school perception.

Regarding the second dimension of school well-being, namely the relationship with the teachers/lecturers, we found that most pupils have a good or very good relationship with their teachers/lecturers. This finding is the same in secondary education as in higher education. In secondary education, we found that girls view their relationship with the teachers more positively than boys. We found no differences in terms of type of education or age. Repeaters in secondary education view their relationship with their teachers less positively.

College students view their relationship with the lecturers more positively than university students. Students who have never repeated have a more positive relationship than repeaters (in primary and/or secondary education).

The multiple regression analyses show that the principal predictors of a positive relationship with the teachers are age in secondary education, and the type of education – i.e. studying at a college – in higher education. In addition, self-image, future prospects and the mother's responsiveness play a role in both groups as well.

3.3. Well-being

We found that Flemish young people generally feel good. They are in particular satisfied with the general course of their lives, and they also score very favourably on the self-appreciation scale. The latter is especially true for men, who score significantly higher on the self-appreciation scale than women. However, our analysis showed that gender-related differences in self-appreciation can be explained by the extent to which one is satisfied with one's own physical features. Indeed, women appear to be significantly less satisfied with their body than men, which has a negative impact on their self-confidence.

Apart from gender, we also examined the way in which age and type of education affect young people's well-being. To analyse age-related differences, we started from the "storm and stress" perspective, which expects young people, and especially adolescents – because of the turbulent life stage they are in – to report a negative well-being. However, our data show that this perspective needs to be nuanced. Although adolescents score somewhat more negatively in certain areas, such as self-appreciation and their view of the future, they appear to be quite satisfied with their lives in general and with their own physical features. As far as the type of education is concerned, the analyses showed that young people in (part-time) vocational secondary education feel worse than young people in general and arts education. Young people in technical secondary education come in between. However, the effect of the type of education appears to be absent in the general "profile of happy young people" presented at the end of the chapter. This profile shows that interpersonal characteristics – representing the way in which young people relate to their direct environment – have the strongest impact on their well-being.

3.4. Fear of crime and punitive attitudes

Fear of crime and punitive attitudes among Flemish young people appear to be (relatively) closely related. The less safe young people feel, the more they will advocate a tougher approach to delinquents and a more punitive and supervisory prevention policy. It is noteworthy, however, that none of these three attitudes – fear of crime, attitude towards tough repression, attitude towards punitive prevention – appear to correlate with victimisation: being the victim of either a personal offence or an offence against property appears to have no significant impact on the extent to which young people feel unsafe and/or to which they advocate a tough approach to delinquents. In other words, the popular link between these concepts is not confirmed by this study. Conversely, the poverty indicator appears to be significantly related to the three variables: the less prosperous young people are, the less safe they will feel and the more they will advocate a tough approach to delinquents and a more punitive prevention. A similar correlation can be found with regard to the impact of the level of education, where lower-skilled people consistently score higher than higher-skilled respondents; the latter feel less unsafe and are less strong advocates of tough repression and/or punitive prevention. It therefore seems that individual conceptions of and attitudes towards victimisation, criminality and the approach to, and prevention of, criminality are not so much related to an actual contact with criminality but are rather affected by broader factors relating to well-being. This is confirmed by the consistent impact of the degree of anxiety about one's own future (i.e. the degree of "foresight") on these different attitudes: the more young people are concerned about their future, the less safe they will feel and the more they will advocate a tough approach to delinquents and punitive prevention.

3.5. The limits of tolerance

We also investigated Flemish young people's attitudes towards other cultures. We found them to be fairly tolerant, and any negative attitudes towards aliens are mainly caused by social-economic factors. Compared to the JOP-Monitor 1, we can say that Flemish young people's attitudes towards other cultures have not changed over the past few years.

Between the ages of 14 and 30, no age-related differences were found in terms of ethnocentrism, although ethnocentric prejudices do appear to be related to gender and education. Young people in general or arts education, and young people who finished their secondary education in these types of education, tend to be less ethnocentric than young people who were or are in technical education. And the latter are in turn less ethnocentric than young people in vocational education. Moreover, boys express a more negative attitude towards aliens than girls. The common explanations for ethnocentrism apparently fail to explain the difference in gender. On the contrary. Since girls have a greater fear of crime, and given their preference for entertainment-oriented media – two elements which are positively related to ethnocentric prejudices – we underestimate the gender-related differences in the field of ethnocentrism when we do not take these elements into account. The gender gap thus becomes even bigger when tested for these explanations of ethnocentrism.

The gender-related difference found in the field of ethnocentrism appears to be mainly a cultural construct. Boys and girls differentiate themselves from each other by professing different ideas and opinions and by engaging in different types of conduct. These elements help to develop gender identity, and the attitude towards aliens is part of this gender identity. The inclusion of a gender measure based on the attitudes and behaviours that are highly typical of boys and girls respectively, halves the effect parameter of gender. In addition, intolerance among boys appears to be more strongly related to the pursuit of autonomy than among girls; conversely, for girls the fear of crime appears to correlate more strongly with ethnocentrism (although the interaction effect is not significant). Both these findings can to a certain extent be related to the strongly rebellious nature of adolescent boys.

3.6. Democratic citizenship

Our definition of "democratic citizenship" emphasises the role of attitudes. Consequently, an interest in politics, a valid voting intention, an extremist voting intention and participation in political actions served as indicators of political participation.

The analyses show that Flemish young people between the ages of 12 and 14 are hardly interested in political life, but that they gradually develop into adult democratic citizens during adolescence. However, during this development process significant differences arise.

As far as age-related differences are concerned, we found that it is especially the oldest age brackets who are interested in politics. A valid voting intention and involvement through chequebook participation, protest actions and conventional participation also increase with age. Moreover, 14- to 21-year-olds appear to have more extremist voting preferences than 22- to 30-year-olds.

In addition, we observed several gender-related differences: men report a stronger interest in politics and have greater valid voting intentions than women. Moreover, they are represented better in conventional types of participation and protest actions, whilst chequebook participation and eco-activism are more popular with women. The hypothesis that women prefer types of participation situated in the private sphere is thus supported by our findings. Furthermore, women appear to be less inclined to vote for extreme-right parties than men.

The most notable finding concerns the differences among the various types of education, in particular between pupils in general secondary education and those in vocational secondary education: pupils in vocational education are less interested in politics, they are less inclined to cast a valid vote and they participate less in all kinds of political action. They also tend to vote more for extremist parties. The same applies to pupils in technical secondary education, but the differences with general secondary education are slightly smaller here.

3.7. Media use and media preferences

In order to investigate Flemish young people's media use and media preferences, we started from the typical subdivision into old and new media, subsequently passing on to a search for structures crossing the borders of digital and analogous.

As far as the traditional written media are concerned, we found that *Humo* (a satirical magazine) and *Het Laatste Nieuws* (a rather sensation-oriented newspaper) are the most popular of the magazines and newspapers covered by the questionnaire. In the field of television and radio, VT4 and Q-Music (two commercial channels oriented towards the younger age groups) are the most popular stations. However, media preferences undergo a strong shift between the ages of 14 and 30. Many stations and magazines aim at specific age groups, and this also appears from the media preferences in terms of age.

For the new media, we distinguished between Internet access and Internet use. As far as the former is concerned, the younger generation is more likely to have Internet access than the older generation. Moreover, low-skilled and medium-skilled young people have less access, and so do young people neither of whose parents has a higher education diploma. Male respondents and young people with two working parents are more likely to have Internet access. Among the 14- to 25-year-olds, there are no differences between age and gender anymore, suggesting the disappearance of the gender gap. As far as Internet use is concerned, young people say they mostly e-mail, use search engines and chat. Across the board, more highly-skilled people use the Internet than low- and medium-skilled people, whilst more men than women surf the Web. Older respondents use the Internet to a lesser extent, and this also applies to young people neither of whose parents have a higher education diploma.

Based on their use of both the traditional and the new media, we can break down young people into five groups, each having their own approach to the old and the new media. This breakdown involves differences which are also found in the analyses of exclusively traditional media, such as the focus on either entertainment or information, but not all groups combine old and new media as yet. The "just-for-fun" users focus mainly on the traditional channels. A second group has a strong focus on the traditional media and uses the new media rarely, and then only pragmatically. The "hybrids with a popular preference" are close to the "just-for-fun" users, but their Internet use is broader. The "hybrid information-seekers" focus more on channels offering a critical extra value. The final group, the "non-users", hardly consumes hardly any media, apart from some entertainment on television.

These groups are not randomly distributed over society. The just-for-fun and the hybrids with a popular media preference are almost equally distributed between boys and girls. In the group focusing on traditional media, women are overrepresented. Conversely, the non-users group and the hybrid information-seekers – the two extreme groups – have relatively more men in their ranks. There are significant differences in terms of age as well. The just-for-fun group is clearly a young group. The hybrid information-seekers and

the non-users are relatively older groups. But especially the group focusing on traditional media includes older members than the other groups.

Finally, three of the five cluster groups are strongly education-related, whilst one group deviates slightly from the actual distribution. The just-for-fun group and the non-users group have an overrepresentation among low-skilled workers, whilst the hybrid information-seekers have a predominance of high-skilled people.

3.8. Young people's ideal life course

Proponents of the individualisation thesis argue that the past half century has brought about a cultural shift in the way young people view their life course. They say that today's young people attach more importance to autonomy and self-steering than in the past. As a result of this cultural change, young people are said to be turning away from the traditional life trajectory, wanting to shape their own biography. If this proposition is correct, this life course will stop being a collectively shared ideal or standard, whilst the average age and the sequence of the main life-course transitions should show a substantial variation, being closely related to the specific idiosyncratic situation of the individual concerned. We subjected this popular and influential proposition to a strict empirical test.

Our data show very little variation in the ideal life course of Flemish young people between 14 and 30 years old. The sequence of the different transitions in young people's ideal life course is quite similar as well. We can therefore conclude that our findings strongly argue against the destandardisation or individualisation of the ideal life course.

The uniformity of young people's vision of their ideal life course is demonstrated by the high degree of correspondence between boys and girls and between students in different types of education. Boys and girls share a common vision of their life course, although minor differences can be perceived for family-related transitions such as moving in with a partner, buying a house or having a first baby. Women ideally expect these transitions to occur one year earlier than men.

Individualisation also presupposes that the ideal is adapted to the actual situation, varying with the respondent's age. Our data show the opposite: the ideal life course hardly changes with the respondent's age. This reinforces the evidence that a collective representation of the ideal or desired life course does exist.

Low- and high-skilled young people seek a life course which is broadly similar in terms of structure and sequence. Discrepancies, if any, are caused by differences in timing. Indeed, high-skilled people study longer. These extra years are neatly integrated into their life course, and the years "lost" vis-à-vis those who do not continue studying can even be caught up later because they will become autonomous faster once they have obtained their diploma.

4. Conduct

The final part deals with young people's conduct. We will address two topics: their participation in social life and in delinquent behaviour.

4.1. Participation in social life

Flemish young people are strongly present in social life. More than one fifth (82%) of Flemish young people between 14 and 30 currently are passive, active or organising members of at least one of the 20 types of associations investigated. Across all associations, a mere 3.3% of the young people has never been a member of an association. Still, the participation of Flemish young people in social life differs according to age, gender and type of education.

Young people's participative behaviour is closely correlated to age. Across all associations investigated, we found that the desire to participate starts decreasing from the age of 16 onwards. Still, like in JOP-Monitor 1 we should distinguish between structured and unstructured types of associations. The first group comprises scouting, local youth work, sports, hobby and cultural associations. Participation in this type of association is typically very well structured and is generally steered or monitored by adults. The second group consists of associations focusing on people's personal initiative, such as youth centres, or more or less stable interactive teams created for organising parties and festivals.

For the structured associations – such as sports clubs, scouting associations and local youth-work initiatives – the inclination to participate decreases from the age of 16 onwards. The situation is different for the unstructured types of youth participation. The participation in youth centres increases up to the age of 19 and only then starts decreasing. A similar pattern is found for participation in the organisation of music festivals or parties. The participation in these initiatives keeps increasing up to the age of 22 and only then starts decreasing again.

These findings allow us to conclude that young adolescents take part in structured social life, generally steered by adults. As they grow older, i.e. during late adolescence, they start preferring types of participation offering a greater scope for personal initiative.

Gender-related differences were observed as well: men's degree of participation is substantially higher than women's. However, this difference appears to be caused by the overrepresentation of men in sports clubs (as is also the case for the adult population). When sports clubs are left out, no significant gender-related differences can be identified. A possible explanation is that competitiveness – a value that is important in sports clubs – is mainly associated with manliness, whilst values such as caring and solidarity are more closely associated with womanliness. Apart from the differences in the degree of participation, we also found gender-related differences in terms of preferences: boys rather take in unstructured, youth-focused organisations, whereas girls prefer structured leisure associations.

A third indicator for participation in social life is the type of education. Hardly any significant differences were found between the pupils in technical and general secondary education. In contrast, the difference between pupils in vocational and in general secondary education is more pronounced and is significant for all types of associations

investigated: pupils in vocational education participate significantly less in all types of associations than pupils in general secondary education.

These findings confirm previous research which found that differences between low- and high-skilled workers occur even at a young age. It is therefore possible that the differences in terms of level of education in the adult population are not caused by the level of education as such, but by the type of education.

4.2. Delinquency

Finally, we charted the phenomenon of "delinquency". Since offending among young people is typically at the centre of both social and scientific discourse, whilst victimisation among young people is underemphasised, both themes were given equal attention in this chapter. The analyses reaffirmed that these two topics should necessarily be studied together, especially in a young population. For instance, we found significant correlations between offending and victimisation for the different types of offences. Moreover, offending and victimisation appeared to be related to similar background variables. The "risk group" identified in this context comprises men aged between 14 and 21 studying in technical or (part-time) vocational education: not only do they in general commit more offences, they also run the highest risk of becoming the victim of an offence themselves. Based on these findings, we make a case for abandoning a one-sided approach to juvenile delinquency – i.e. with the focus on the offending dimension – and emphasise the necessity of developing a more multilateral dialogue in which the offending and victimisation dimensions of the "delinquency" phenomenon are highlighted by focusing on the underlying dynamics.

5. Conclusion

Based on the data of JOP-Monitor 2, this book extensively investigates Flemish young people's social world and living conditions. We analysed the data for a population ranging from 12-year-old teenagers who have just left primary school to (almost) adult, autonomous 30-year-olds. The investigation addressed a wide range of themes.

This broad age range has made it possible to describe young people's life course in great detail. It has enabled us to present the way in which young people gradually develop their autonomy (gaining financial autonomy, leaving the parental home, etc.) and their own family life. We have also been able to analyse developments in terms of attitudes, preferences and behaviour: how young people develop into politically competent and well-informed citizens, how their media use and interests shift, etc.

These age-related developments often appeared to be gender-related as well. The social worlds of boys and girls are characterised by significant differences. In this case, the cliché of "boys will be boys" appears to be true. For instance, boys express a more negative attitude towards other cultures than girls. Boys, in particular between age 14 and 21, also commit more offences and run a higher risk of becoming the victims of offences as well. Still, these "rough" boys on average stay longer in the parental home than the girls. As far as attitudes, preferences and behaviour are concerned, the main differences are typically found in terms of young people's education. Lower-skilled young

people and young people who are or have been in vocational education prefer other leisure activities and other media channels and are less interested in politics than high-skilled young people or young people in general secondary education. These are just a few of the differences found.

This second Monitor built on the JOP-Monitor 1, which was conducted at the end of 2005 and the beginning of 2006. However, two measurements are not enough to allow us to chart trends or evolutions – at least three successive measurements are required for this purpose. Still, the data presented here allow us to conclude that young people are less "fickle" than could be deduced from commercial trend studies. Clothing and music styles may change every season, but when it comes to attitudes and behaviour, young people appear to have hardly changed over the past three years. For instance, young people in 2008 did not leave the parental home sooner or later than in 2005, nor have they become more or less tolerant in the meantime. The differences we found in terms of gender, age and education in the results of the JOP-Monitor 1 were largely confirmed by the JOP-Monitor 2. To make more solid statements about developments over time, we – the researchers – hope that we will once be able to add a third measurement. Still, Flemish young people for now do not appear to be more rebellious, wild, insubordinate or radically different than the older generations tend to claim. Every past generation also had its "today's youth"...

Bibliography

Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M. & Walgrave, L. (ed.) (2007). *Jongeren in cijfers en letters. Bevindingen uit de JOP-Monitor 1*. Leuven: Lannoo.