

Better Procedures for Fairer Outcomes: Are Youth Quotas Required by Intergenerational Justice?

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Abstract

This paper asks whether intergenerational justice demands the introduction of youth quotas in parliaments. In section 1, I identify two key challenges of intergenerational justice: (A) the long-term challenge of meeting our duties towards future generations and (B) the shorter-term challenge of fairness for current younger generations. I argue that the environmental and economic prospects for younger and future generations are so dangerously threatened that it is a requirement of intergenerational justice that we seriously consider implementing any policies that may increase our chances to improve their set of opportunities. In section 2, I ask whether youth quotas in parliament can increase our chances to meet the two pre-identified objectives. I assess some potential objections, and, against these, I argue that there are strong reasons to believe that youth quotas can improve our chances to meet both objectives and that we must seriously consider their implementation. In section 3, I highlight two different types of quotas: (i) age group quotas and (ii) birth cohort quotas. I evaluate their respective potential role in bringing us closer to objectives (A) and (B). In section 4, I summarize the key steps of the argument and conclude that youth quotas are required by intergenerational justice.

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“Being a great big generation makes you a powerful disruptive force: you pour through society like a flooding river breaking its banks.” (Willett 2010, xvii)

*“The Youth of a Nation are the trustees of Posterity”
(Disraeli [1845] 1998, 422)*

*“Youth has always been the repository of anger about the present and the harbinger of a better tomorrow.”
(Standing 2011, 66)*

*“When, before the 2005 general election, the Electoral Commission launched a campaign to persuade young people to vote with the shout-line: ‘If you don’t do politics... there’s not much you do do’, they missed the point entirely. It’s not that young people don’t do politics, it’s that modern politics doesn’t do young people”
(Malik and Howker, 154)*

*“Part of what sustained the development of an autonomous women's movement was the arrogance of those who thought that ideas could be separated from presence.”
(Philips 1995, 7)*

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Introduction

The question of the political representation of young people in parliaments is particularly relevant to the topic of intergenerational justice. As the ratio of young people to elderly people decreases in most wealthy countries, many are concerned that young people may get sidelined, and that our democracies may become gerontocracies (Chauvel 1998; Griffith 2011; Howker and Malik 2010; Tremmel 2006; Willetts 2010). In most European countries, very few MPs are under 40 years old and close to none under 30 years old. In this context, the option of introducing youth quotas in parliaments seems particularly appealing. And yet, there is almost no research available on the topic (Van Parijs 1998) and politicians have not yet considered it as a relevant reform to consider (Philips 1995, 63). How should we explain this lack of critical engagement with the invisibility of youth in parliament and with a policy that seems to come to mind? Whether we believe in representation as the ideal of democracy or as the second best option after participatory democracy, it seems that the possibility of implementing quotas in order to prevent some social groups from becoming marginalised or excluded is now broadly acknowledged. Gender and ethnic quotas are studied, deliberated, tested or implemented. Why aren't age quotas, in general, and youth quotas, in particular, discussed too?

In fact, there is something special about age that makes it very different from gender and ethnicity: we all age (Daniels 1988; Gosseries 2007; McKerlie 1989). Therefore, one might argue that there being fewer young people in parliaments is not a problem in and of itself. Inequalities between age groups may be considered as *prima facie* less problematic than inequalities between other social groups. As Axel Gosseries puts it “a society that heavily discriminates between people on grounds of age could still ultimately treat people equally, if we consider their access to given resources over their complete lives. Everyone's turn will come.” (Gosseries 2007) This makes age fundamentally different from gender or ethnicity, which do not evolve in a predetermined way. If women and ethnic minorities are not represented in

parliaments, they will have been treated unequally in comparison with other citizens. On the contrary, if you adopt a diachronic perspective, if young people are not represented, they will not have been treated unequally over their complete lives, if compared with other age groups who were young themselves at some point. This specificity of age partly explains why the absence of young people in parliaments is not seen as an injustice like inequalities in representation between other social groups. As Philips argues in a brief paragraph on the underrepresentation of young people in politics: “The situation of women looks more obviously unfair [than young people’s] in that women will be under-represented throughout their entire lives.” (Philips 1995, 63).

For this reason, it is likely that the best defences of youth quotas will have to rely on an instrumental justification. Rather than arguing, as for gender, that the inequality in representation is *prima facie* unfair, one may want to insist on both the negative consequences that the absence of young people in parliaments causes and the positive outcomes that introducing youth quotas could bring about. This paper will provide this instrumental justification by arguing that there are two types of quotas (age and cohort quotas) that can help in bringing about intergenerationally fairer outcomes. To this purpose, I will first present what I take to be the two core challenges of intergenerational justice: (A) the challenge of justice between non-overlapping generations (or the long-term challenge of treating future generations fairly); and (B) the overlapping challenge of justice between current birth cohorts (or the shorter-term challenge of treating young people fairly) (*section I*). I will then ask whether youth quotas can help us in meeting this double intergenerational demand of treating future and younger generations fairly (*section II*). Finally, I will evaluate the prospects of both age and cohort quotas in meeting these intergenerational objectives (*section III*). The last section of this paper will summarize my argument and provide a synthetic conclusion to the question of whether the implementation of youth quotas is the answer to changes in age demographics and is required by intergenerational justice (*section IV*).

My methodology in this essay is best described as that of Philosophy of Public Policy. I will focus on the questions of justice and democratic representation that arise from

considering the policy option of youth quotas in parliaments. I will provide the relevant conceptual distinctions and clarifications to make sense of the normative dimensions of the policy in question. I will touch upon the practicalities of the implementation of youth quotas, but only insofar as they are relevant to the normative questions that I am concerned with – namely, are youth quotas required by intergenerational justice?

Section I - Objectives: two challenges for intergenerational justice.

Intergenerational justice refers to the realm of normative questions emerging from concerns that the interests of some generations (in general future and younger generations) are not being taken seriously. The simple conceptual distinction between overlapping and non-overlapping generations helps in isolating two fundamental problems of intergenerational justice: the long-term challenge of meeting our duties of justice towards future generations and the shorter-term challenge of justice between current overlapping birth cohorts. Philosophers interested in the topic of intergenerational justice often take it to be fascinating because it concerns the realm of normative considerations that apply to non-contemporaries. The importance of questions of justice between overlapping generations is thus often underestimated even though, as Gosseries and Meyer argue: “we should not lose sight of the fact that justice between neighboring generations is not, as such, a negligible field of investigation, as those insisting on justice between non-overlapping and remote generations may too quickly assume.” (Gosseries and Meyer 2009, 4).

In this first section, I will present the two key challenges of intergenerational justice between overlapping and non-overlapping cohorts, explain in what ways we are failing future and younger generations altogether, identify two key demands of intergenerational justice and argue that we ought to do our best to bring about the relevant changes.

(1) The non-overlapping dimension of intergenerational justice: are we failing future generations?

The environmental crisis results in large part from the incapacity of political leaders and representatives to reverse, stop, or at least stabilize climate change, global warming and their various consequences. It epitomizes politicians' difficulty to integrate long-term concerns in their political agendas. Mass production and consumption have been abusing the environment for a long time now and much of the resulting damage is irreversible. Future generations will have to tackle a mountain of problems, some of which we can anticipate and some that we cannot. We know that food, water and clean air will be scarce, and that many natural resources will simply disappear forever. Some of the losses are hard to swallow - such as the extinction of an astonishing number of species as a result of deforestation and overfishing (Brook, Sodhi, and Ng 2003; Jackson et al. 2001). Some estimate that up to 150 species are disappearing every single day (Knight 2012). We know that there will be unprecedented and always more frequent natural catastrophes as a result of climate change (IPPC 2007). We also know that some countries will be hit harder than others and that some land will inevitably be replaced by water, forcing millions to migrate. In short, we have passed several points of no return and will pass more in the coming years.

This urgency and irreversibility of the environmental crisis poses serious normative questions on what we owe future generations. It would be absurd to believe that we ought to sacrifice today's people for the sake of future generations. We face fundamental challenges such as global poverty and unemployment that demand a strong commitment and many investments. At the other end, however, it is morally dubious to be politically shortsighted and sacrifice future generations' interests. For the past four decades, philosophers have been trying to provide an adequate conception of our obligations to future people (De-Shalit 1995; Gosseries and Meyer 2009; Mulgan 2006; Barry 1999; Dierksmeier 2006; Gosseries 2003; Meyer 2010; Barry 1997; Rawls 1971).

A particularly appealing way to frame our duties to future generations is derived from the key premise of *luck egalitarianism*: it is fundamentally unfair if people are made unequal through no fault or choice of their own. Luck egalitarianism, as Arneson suggests (2004), is based on two types of views: a “luckist” view and an egalitarian view. The luckist view tells us that it is morally wrong if brute luck determines people’s status and opportunities: for instance, features on which one has no power such as one’s sex, social background or ethnic origins should not limit the scope of what one may be able to do in society. On the contrary, there must be a correlation between individual responsibility and the choices people make, on the one hand, and the opportunities people end up with, on the other hand. This responsibility-based component of luck egalitarianism has strong implications for questions of intergenerational justice. Future generations do not exist yet, do not have an agency and can thus never be said to be responsible for any damages to the environment they will inherit. Since they are completely at our mercy, it is unfair if we restrict their opportunities. The other basic luck egalitarianism view, the equality component, takes equality to be a core requirement of justice.

Brought together, those two components result in the view that the only inequalities that are acceptable are those stemming from genuine choices made by the worse-off. On luck egalitarianism, what we owe future generations is an equal set of opportunities or an equal standard of living to ours. The luckist idea about responsibility is widely accepted and gave rise to a series of conceptions on what we owe future generations. However, these theories often vary in the extent to which they are strictly egalitarian. One view, which I will now refer to as the ‘diachronic equality principle’, tells us that we owe future generations an equal set of opportunities, no less but not more either. Some other views have a weaker sustainability condition, which leaves more scope for variations. Even if there is some disagreement on whether our duties to future generations are best expressed in terms of strict equality or sustainability, most contend that justice demands that future generations be made no worse-off than we are, based on the luckist assumption.

One of the clearest formulations of this view can be found in Brian Barry’s famous article “Sustainability and Intergenerational Justice”: “It appears that sustainability is

at least a necessary condition of justice. For the principle of responsibility says that, unless people in the future can be held responsible for the situation that they find themselves in, they should not be worse off than we are. And no generation can be held responsible for the state of the planet it inherits.” (Barry 1999, 106) The philosopher Philippe Van Parijs similarly formulates his view that intergenerational justice requires “each generation, each birth cohort, to make sure the situation of the next generation somehow measured, on a per capita basis is no worse than its own.” (Van Parijs 1998, 106) This goal of diachronic sustainability through time applies to other domains than the environment. It has implications for the levels of debt we are entitled to pass on to future generations, for the public infrastructure we must invest in (such as roads, libraries, and housing), for the budget we must devote to research (for instance health and sustainable energies) and for the extent to which we must protect heritage. However, the environmental challenge is central because the environmental crisis threatens the basic subsistence and, in fact, the very existence of future generations.

Restoring intergenerational fairness in this first sense (A) of representing the long-term interests of future generations fairly, mainly by advancing the cause of environmental sustainability, must therefore be made a priority. It is difficult to underestimate the level at which we have failed and are still failing future generations. Some things can be done, but we must really accelerate current initiatives and come up with new ideas if we are to make a difference. As Brian Barry argued in 1999: “[w]e know the direction in which change is required, and we know that there is absolutely no risk that we shall find ourselves doing more than required.” (Barry 1997, 64) This is likely to be even truer now than it was 15 years ago. Therefore, more than ever, we need to insure that our political representatives have the political will to bring about drastic changes and operate a quick economic transition to green energies. This paper will thus ask the following question: can youth quotas increase our chances to meet objective (A)? This is the first side of the problem this essay wishes to solve. Any policies that can increase our chances of attending to these urgent long-term problems deserve to be seriously considered.

(2) The overlapping dimension of intergenerational justice: are we failing younger generations?

If future generations are being failed, current young people's interests are not being served very well either. They are often referred to as the "internship generation", "generation precarious", "generation jobless" (The Economist 2013) or "jilted generation"¹ (Howker and Malik 2010). In the UK, far too many young people are striving for jobs and affordable housing. Over a million UK youth are "NEETS" – not in education, employment or training. According to the Rowntree Foundation, even before the financial crisis, in 2007, 23% of the 16-19 and 10% of the 20-24 were poor (Iacovou and Aassve 2007). Those most at risk are the less educated, and yet young people have to pay increasing fees if they wish to get a higher education degree. At the same time, benefits for the young are still very limited. The weekly job seeker allowance for under 25 years old is only £56.25 (Directgov 2012a) and the hourly minimum wage for those lucky enough to find a job is only £4.98 for the 18-20, £3.68 for the 16-17 and £2.65 for apprentices (Directgov 2012b). The vast majority of internships are unpaid and unemployed young people may well be soon threatened with loss of their benefits if they do not accept working for free as part of the new workfare schemes of the British Government (Malik 2011; Tapsfield 2012).

In Europe more generally, young people suffer very high levels of unemployment and poverty and their prospects are worrying. According to the OECD, in March 2012 over half of Spanish and Greek 15-24 years old were unemployed and over 1 in 5 in the European Union as a whole, and these numbers are set to rise again (Sedghi 2012; Groom 2013). Approximately 14 million young people are NEETS, which costs the EU about 3 billion euros a week in welfare and lost production: "The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said Europe was "failing in its social contract" with the young and rising political disenchantment could reach levels similar to those that sparked North African uprisings during the Arab spring." (Malik

¹ By "jilted generation", Malik and Howker refer specifically to those born after 1979 in the UK. They were the first generation to pay tuition fees, they started university when property prices started to considerably increase and they will spend the next 30 years of their working life paying off government debt. This is assuming they get a job, and of course that is far from obvious given they are going through the worst recession in decades (Howker and Malik 2010). From now on, I will refer to the jilted generation in their sense.

2012). The economist Guy Standing worries that young people make up the majority of what he calls the “precariat” - this class in the making of people facing lives of insecurity: “Not only are more youth in precarious jobs, where wages are lower anyhow, but their bargaining position is weakened in accessing all jobs, while the absence of enterprise and state benefits intensifies their vulnerability to poverty.” (Standing 2011, 66). Young people are doing very badly in Europe and across the world more generally: “The financial meltdown hit youth hard. Millions lost jobs, millions more could not enter the labour market, and those who did found them had lower wages than their predecessors. (...) Across the world, youth dropped out of the labour force at three times the rate of adults.” (Standing 2011, 77).

This widespread disastrous situation of young people may suggest that the short-term demands of intergenerational justice, as fairness between overlapping cohorts, may not be met either. There are at least three ways in which one could consider that this situation is *intergenerationally unfair*: young people are failed from the point of view of (1) prudential lifespan planning, (2) diachronic equality and (3) relational synchronic equality. I shall explain and develop each of these now.

- Prudential lifespan planning: young people as an age group

The philosopher Norman Daniels has extensively published on the topic of age group justice and particularly on how institutions should allocate resources fairly between age groups (Daniels 1988, 2008, 1983). He argues that institutions should be “prudent” in the sense that they must maximize “lifespan efficiency” – that is, they must make people’s lives go as well as possible. Daniels imagined a procedure, the prudential lifespan account, where planners are placed behind a veil of ignorance, so that they ignore their age. They are asked to distribute a given bundle of resources throughout their lifespan so as to maximize lifespan efficiency: “How should that lifetime expectation of enjoying a certain level of primary social goods be distributed over each stage of life so that lifetime well-being is maximized?” (Daniels 1988, 62) The outcomes of this procedure tell us what investments and distributions are fair, and eventually which inequalities between age groups are acceptable.

Using Daniels's framework, one can see why high rates of unemployment and poverty at a young age are extremely problematic. Guy Standing's reference to Warren Buffet's snowball theory is interesting in highlighting the extent to which youth poverty and joblessness is fundamentally "imprudent": "The earlier someone can define their skills and ambitions, the longer they have to let them roll, accumulating size and power. If early precious years are spent groping around in precarious jobs, the capacity to develop will be permanently impaired." (Standing 2011, 78) Youth unemployment and poverty are likely to be "corrosive disadvantages" to borrow Jonathan Wolff's and Avner de Shait's term (2007), in the sense that disadvantage at a young age is likely to cluster into further disadvantages over the lifespan, yielding severe outcomes in the long run. One could therefore argue that, the younger the disadvantage, the worse the quality of life, and thus the more imprudent the distribution. For this reason, age group justice requires that preventive measures be implemented to maximize lifespan efficiency and to avoid the phenomenon we have just identified as the snowball effect and clustering of disadvantage over time. This is a first sense in which young people are being failed: institutions do not reflect prudential lifespan planning, and are therefore unfair to young people as an age group.

- Diachronic equality: young people as a birth cohort

This leads us to the second way in which young people are treated unfairly. In the previous section on the rights of future generation, I pointed to the principle of diachronic equality, which states that it is unfair if, through no fault of their own, future generations are been made worse off than previous ones. As the sociologist Louis Chauvel argues about France (this can be extended to many European countries), "[f]or the first time in an era of peace, the youth of the new generation are not better off than their parents at the same age." (Chauvel 2010, 17). The situation of young people, at least in terms of unemployment and poverty rates, seems to be in fact worse than that of their parents at the same age: "Although many other groups make up the precariat, the most common image is of young people emerging from school and college to enter a precarious existence lasting years, often made all the more frustrating because their parent's generation had seemingly held stable jobs."

(Standing 2011, 67) Young people are not likely to be compensated later in their lifespan. On the contrary, many expect that the birth cohort of current young people will do much worse than the previous cohort over their complete lives. A second way in which young people are not been treated fairly is therefore that they cannot expect to receive the same benefits than their parents in terms of employment, income and pensions over their complete lives, which contradicts the principle of diachronic equality or sustainability. Louis Chauvel indeed argues that the current generation of young people were failed by the generation of their parents and that “[t]he generational gaps result from double gains and double pains.” (Chauvel 2010, 9)

The diachronic equality principle here fundamentally intersects with Daniels’s prudential lifespan thesis. By comparing different cohorts in the past, Louis Chauvel has shown that the unemployment rates of the cohorts that endured high youth unemployment rates remain much higher, and their earnings abnormally low when they become adults. He calls this phenomenon “the scarring effect” and is fundamentally linked to the clustering of disadvantage through time phenomenon I first appealed to. When jobs are scarce, new entrants have to accept lower wages in order to find a job; then there is a lack of a catch-up on earnings so they remain low because of the point in which they entered the labor market. Similarly, the lack of valued work experiences provokes a decline in ambitions and self-confidence, which in turn might send negative signals to the employers. This spurs even more experiences of unemployment, a slowdown in job progression, and it explains why such workers often suffer from low earnings. As a result, “when the difficulties disappear, the cohorts who faced these problems continue to suffer from long-term consequences of past handicaps.” (Chauvel 2010: 16) These economic long-term consequences of youth unemployment are of course doubled with a set of other negative outcomes: there is an increased risk of unhappiness, frustration and violence as well as of social and political disengagement.

Current levels of youth unemployment are therefore fundamentally unfair because those left behind are likely to become impoverished adults and then impoverished elderly people. It is not just its young people, as an age group, that Europe is failing, it is its future adults and elderly people: it is a vast portion of a birth cohort.

- Relational synchronic equality between age groups

There is a third dimension of intergenerational justice that suggests that young people are being treated unfairly. I call this the relational synchronic principle of age group justice. As opposed to our previous diachronic principle concerned with equality between cohorts through time, this principle is fundamentally *synchronic*, in the sense that it is concerned with how age groups fare in relation to each other at a specific time and regardless of the diachronic rationale of a given distribution. This principle is also fundamentally *relational* because it is based on the basic view that justice demands that we live in a community of equals, which means, according to the philosopher Elizabeth Anderson (1999), that people must be able to stand as equals in front of each other without risk of oppression, domination, exclusion, marginalisation or other objectionable relationships of inequality. Applied to the question of what justice and equality between people of different ages means, this relational understanding of the requirements of justice points in the direction of something like a synchronic relational principle of equality: people must be able, at any point in their lives, to be included in their political and social communities and not to be marginalized by other age groups.

This fundamentally applies to the elderly, for instance. We must make sure that the elderly do not become sidelined and marginalized, spatially and politically as this threatens the ideal of a community of equals. But this also applies to young people. To a large extent, young people are not fully participating members of our communities as poverty and unemployment threatens to exclude many of them. The very low turnouts of young people in most elections and the absence of political representatives from these age groups are a key expression of the young being sidelined. The absence of a young political voice within the workforce is another aspect of this exclusion, as Alessandro Delfanti, of the San Precario Connection, suggests: “Our generation has lost the right to exert conflict within the productive sphere” (Johal [2010] in Standing 2011, 78). And as Standing concludes, “youth need a collective voice of some sort.” (Standing 2011, 78) The political absence and silence of young people can be said to strongly jeopardize the ideal of a community where

citizens stand as equals. In this sense, one could argue that young people are being failed in a third sense: their disempowerment and disengagement from the different levels of politics make them a politically marginalised group and prevent their standing as equals.

There are therefore at least three fundamental ways in which young people are being treated unfairly: as an age group, they suffer the consequences of fundamentally imprudent (and therefore, as Daniels argues, unfair) lifespan planning; their prospects, as a birth cohort, are likely to be inferior to that of the previous cohort, through no fault of their own; and they are not fully participating members of a community of social and political equals. Restoring intergenerational fairness in this second sense (B) of representing the interests of young people as an age group and as a birth cohort fairly, mainly by decreasing the staggering risk of poverty and unemployment that falls on them, must therefore be made a priority.

It seems that Barry's view, about the intergenerational challenge (A) to meet our duties of justice towards future generations, that "there is absolutely no risk that we shall find ourselves doing more than required." (Standing 2011, 78) might also apply to the intergenerational objective (B) to meet the interests of younger generations fairly. In the same way as for the environmental crisis, any policies that can ease the burden of the jilted generation must be seriously considered. Can youth quotas increase our chances to meet objective (B)? Might it be the required voice for young people that is so crucially needed? This is the second side of the problem this essay wishes to solve.

(3) Two objectives of intergenerational justice

In the previous two sub-sections, I have highlighted two fundamental requirements of intergenerational justice that can be spelled out in the form of the two following objectives:

Objectives	Intergenerational features
(A) Affording a better standard of living to future generations – including through promoting environmental sustainability.	Non-overlapping Concerns cohortal justice Long term
(B) Improving the situation of young people - including by tackling youth unemployment, poverty and exclusion.	Overlapping Concerns cohortal & age group justice Shorter-term

Two challenges of Intergenerational Justice

I have suggested that these two objectives are both of fundamental urgency and moral importance. I have also suggested that Brian Barry’s view that there is no risk to do too much applies to both these objectives. This suggest that whichever policy may increase our chances to meet either objectives deserves serious consideration.

There may be other and perhaps more efficient policies to achieve these goals than youth quotas in parliaments. One interesting option could be the introduction of a Universal Basic Income for young people – a monthly cash grant that allows for a decent standard of living granted unconditionally. If granted at the European level, a Universal Basic Income (UBI) would put an end to poverty, reduce job scarcity, empower individuals in the labour market, and thus considerably improve the situation of young people and arguably, subsequently diminish the scarring effect by preventing a clustering of disadvantage across their lifespan. UBI could thus increase our chances to meet objective (B). It could also increase our chances to improve the standard of living of future generations, for less obvious reasons. Indeed, Christian Arnspurger and Warren A. Johnson (2011) argue that UBI could encourage frugal modes of living that need to be experienced for the sake of the environmental transition. Too few people are able to experience alternative modes of living based on different forms of consumption and production. The “marginal people” who do try, the authors argue, often live poverty and are unrecognized by society, while they experience lifestyles and modes of production that deserve to be developed. Freeing people, especially young people, from the labour market may free up some time for

further innovations and experiences that could immensely benefit future generations (such as eco-villages and sustainable farming). Regulation of the labour market to facilitate new entries, a development of trainings for the young, and reducing university fees to help young people in remaining included may help in meeting objective (B). More radical and sustainable energetic decisions could be taken and more regulations at the global level could get us closer to objective (A).

However, assuming that we know what the requirements of intergenerational justice are (A and B) and what we ought to do about it, we need to ask whether our democratic institutions can take us there. Unfortunately, there is a direct correlation between the way our democratic systems are structured and the deplorably shortsighted results we get. This suggests that if we want fairer outcomes, we may need better representative and deliberative procedures. Just like there is a very likely correlation between the absence of women in politics and sexist outcomes, or the absence of ethnic minorities and racist outcomes, it is very likely that the absence of future and younger future generations in politics, in general, and in parliaments, in particular, has a direct correlation for the policies that will be implemented and for whether or not we will move closer to our objectives A and B. This suggests that, like for women and ethnic minorities, youth quotas deserve serious consideration. From now on, I will therefore focus on whether introducing youth quotas in parliaments could increase our chances to promote A and B.

Section II – Promises: can youth quotas in parliaments increase our chances of meeting the demands of intergenerational justice?

The introduction of youth quotas is a legal way to enforce a youth presence in parliaments as a means of tackling their underrepresentation. In France for instance, out of 577 MPs only 48 are under 40 years old, with only one MP under 30 years old, 429 MPs are over 50, including 215 over 60 years old (Assemblée Nationale 2012). In the UK, the situation is very similar. There is also a direct correlation between age

and turnout at the General Elections. In 2010, the turnout rates for over 65 years old citizens was over 76% and only 44% for under 25 year olds (Cracknell, McGuinness, and Rhodes 2011, 42). Young people are much more disengaged politically than their elder and this is both reflected in turnout rates and in the very low numbers of young MPs in Parliaments.

It is against this background of political underrepresentation of young people that the alternative of youth quotas in parliaments seems appealing. It could consist in reserving a certain number of seats for MPs under the age of 30 years old. Now the question is, will changing the kind of *presence* (demography) we have in parliaments can be expected to have an impact on the kind of *ideas* (policies) that will be advanced?² And if so then could youth quotas increase our chances of promoting objectives A and B? This section will first consider the possible connection between the introduction of youth quotas and the long-term goal of meeting the interests of future generations fairly. I will then focus on objective B.

(1) Can youth quotas in parliaments increase our chances to meet objective A?

First, one can ask whether the presence of young people in parliaments could have a positive impact on the interests of future generations - on the objective of environmental sustainability, for instance. As early as 1845, Benjamin Disraeli asserted that "*the Youth of a Nation are the trustees of Posterity*" (Disraeli [1845] 1998, 422). He used this formula in a very different context, but perhaps one could extend its insight to today's long-term environmental challenges. Could it be the case that young people can be considered as the representatives of the future and thus that youth quotas would give a voice to future generations?

First of all, it could be argued that young people are more likely to be longsighted because they will live longer than other age groups, by definition. Seats for young people in parliaments could thus increase chances of long-term issues being raised.

² My distinction between the concepts of "presence" and "idea" is borrowed from Professor Anne Philips (1995).

The absence of young people in parliaments, on the contrary, may render it more difficult for very long-term issues to be raised. The main worry, as expressed by the philosopher Philippe Van Parijs is that “they [the elderly] may use it [their votes] in excessive manner to benefit their unavoidably short-term self-interest.” (Van Parijs 1998, 293). Similarly, Philip Longman argues that “[i]n an aging population, the great danger is that the electorate will become more and more focused on the short term, for there will eventually be fewer and fewer voters who are parents of young children and more who are concerned with having the state provide either for their own aged parents or for themselves in retirement.” (Longman 1987, 143). Age does seem to have some impact on people’s views on which policies should be implemented: “voting at referenda on long-term ecological issues such as whether or not a country should abandon nuclear energy has been shown to be strongly related to age.” (Van Parijs 1998, 298) Therefore, as Philippe Van Parijs argues, “there is at least some prima facie evidence showing that age-related self-interest affects voting behaviour.” (Van Parijs 1998, 298) This suggests that bringing in more young people in parliament may have an impact on the nature of the ideas that get expressed and perhaps on issues that have a long-term impact being taken more seriously.

Young people have a higher stake in the future than their older representatives since they will have to suffer from many direct consequences of the environmental crisis in their lifetime. They may therefore prove fiercer defenders of future generations since they can more directly apprehend the potentially disastrous impact of letting things get worse. It thus seems reasonable to argue that having a number of young MPs expressing their views in parliaments could help in furthering the cause of future generations. The first sense in which they may be said to be the trustees of posterity is thus that they are more likely to be long-sighted.

Some could even go further and argue that since young people are more direct stakeholders in long-term challenges, they ought to be given *more* power than other age groups in deciding which policies should be implemented, especially in areas that have a strong long-term impact – for instance, when deciding which energies should be developed. However, this could be problematic. After all, if we live in a community of equals, then everyone should be able to have their say, whatever their

age. Disempowering³ (or even disfranchising) the elderly would seem to contradict the requirements of social equality and respect. Moreover, it would be unreasonable to suppose that after a certain age people do not care about future generations. People have children, grandchildren and do worry about them to a very large extent. Even if they don't have children, they can have humanistic concerns for the future of mankind. They should also be able to make long-term responsible judgements. So granting disproportionate power over to younger people over these discussions would seem unnecessarily extreme. However, the other extreme of having almost no young person at all in parliaments does seem fundamentally problematic. In this context, the introduction of youth quotas could be defended on long-termist grounds.

The strongest opposition to youth quotas in parliaments is likely to be that MPs need a certain experience and a certain set of skills and that it simply takes time to acquire these. On this view, enforcing youth quotas could amount to lowering the quality of representative bodies through the involvement of inexperienced and unqualified youth. However, this objection can be partly dismissed if we recognize the type of expertise that young people can potentially bring into parliaments. Indeed, young people can also be said to be “the trustees of posterity” insofar as they operate a kind of transition between the past and the future. Many of them will have just been educated, will have a good knowledge of new technologies, and can have more original ideas at a time where we precisely crucially need innovation. Instead of focusing on young people's lack of experience, we should recognize this fundamental attractive feature of youth.

Moreover, and perhaps more convincingly, there is an extensive literature on the benefits of intergenerational practices and collaborations for the transmission of knowledge and the development of original and innovating problem solving mechanisms⁴. The French President François Hollande, for instance, introduced the “contrats de générations” (generational contracts) within firms, a scheme to encourage the recruitment of young people and facilitate their training process, while protecting the job positions of senior workers. The launch of this programme was defended

³ In an interesting article, the philosopher Philippe Van Parijs discussed the possibility of disfranchising the elderly to protect younger and future generations' interests. (Van Parijs 1998)

⁴ The Beth Johnson Foundation's Centre for Intergenerational Practices, for instance, provides much research on the benefits of intergenerational practices (Beth Johnson Foundation 2013).

based on the view that intergenerational environments foster a better understanding and resolution of problems and spur more innovation and originality (Ministère du Travail). Why shouldn't these sorts of collaborations take place within parliaments too? If we move from a narrow, individualistic understanding of expertise and focus instead on the quality of legislative bodies as a whole, then we might consider that more diverse parliaments are very likely to have more expertise. There is a great chance that this would foster better debates, better exchanges and thus better representative institutions.

There are therefore strong reasons to believe that young people can act as the trustees of posterity and that their presence might increase our chances to meet objectives A. Note that this defence of youth quotas is *instrumental* in the sense that it relies on the potential positive outcomes that the enforcement of quotas might bring about. If enough data showed a negative correlation or even no correlation between youth and our objectives, the argument would lose its grip. This way, some may insist that young people do not care that much about the future and the environment. For instance, some studies show that grandparents recycle more than their grandchildren and women recycle more than men (Gray 2010). More young people than any other age group did not happen to know what was happening in their councils regarding recycling than any other age group (Click Green 2010). This may threaten the view that young people are the trustees of posterity and suggest that the equation young people = forward looking and elderly people = shortsighted is caricatural and inaccurate.

This contradicting evidence can however be integrated by simply recognising two things. First, we have to be realistic about the prospects of youth quotas in parliaments for objective A. We should not be naïve and not expect it to be sufficient on its own in bringing about fairer long-term outcomes. Procedures must be made better, but so must education, research and democratic participation. Representation is only part of the puzzle. However, we have shown that there are at least two other strong reasons to believe that the introduction of quotas for young people would bring in positive outcomes: young people have a more direct stake in long-term issues being brought on the table, and their absence deprives parliaments from fruitful intergenerational

collaborations that are likely to lead to more innovative problem solving. It seems that the strongest argument stems from the possibility of an improved expertise of legislative bodies as a whole through intergenerational collaboration.

Second, it is important to point to the fact that this contradicting piece of evidence might not threaten the view that a young age may have a positive influence on long termism. In fact, the mere fact that the current cohort of young people do recycle poorly, for instance, can be explained by cohort effects rather than age effects. In fact, it is not very surprising that the current cohort of young people, struggling with unprecedented rates of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion are not particularly good at being committed to long-term issues. The social structures of which they are victims force them to be shortsighted. When even finding affordable housing is arduous, we should probably not find surprising that many do not take time to find out how recycling works in their neighbourhoods. This therefore leads us to the second objective that we have previously identified: the relatively shorter term challenge of meeting the interests of the 'jilted generation' fairly. There are very good reasons to believe that the presence of more young people could make parliaments better in promoting objective A and we should not misinterpreted the jilted generation's possible failure to engage better as telling us otherwise.

(2) Can youth quotas increase our chances to meet objective B?

In the last section, I have suggested that young people could be well placed to represent the interests of future generations, or at least, that more age diverse parliaments could encourage the development of more original and innovative ideas. Could youth quotas also improve our chances of tackling the critical challenges young people currently face? After all, anyone could represent the interests of young people and identify what needs to be done for them. Why would having more young persons in parliaments increase our chances to solve problems like youth poverty and unemployment?

The first reason may be fairly simple: there is a difference between period and age effect (Chauvel 1998, 286-289). The period effect is the impact of the ensemble of

events that happen at a given time. It affects everyone living at a given time: for instance the effects of a financial crisis can be described as period effects. Arguably, many people suffer its consequences, regardless of their age. However, there is also an age effect, which is used to describe the fact that being of a certain age also has an impact on given outcomes. Poverty or unemployment as a result of the same financial crisis will be experienced very differently if lived at a young age or towards the end of one's career. For young people, youth unemployment and poverty can lead to dependency on one's parents, including for accommodation. Youth unemployment may also lead to the postponement of projects young people might value, such as founding a family or getting a home. In parliaments, younger MPs may pick on specific problems relating to housing, education and unemployment in a different way than older MPs, who may in turn be more concerned with healthcare and pension-related problems. The 28 years old MP Jo Swinson, in 2009, complained about the lack of age and cohort-related diversity within the UK parliament: "There are a huge number of Oxbridge-educated lawyers elected as MPs when they are middle-aged. There is not a single MP who has paid tuition fees. We have a large part of the population with debts from these or who face working well into old age because of pension changes, but there is no person in Parliament who shares, or will share, their experience." (Parkinson 2009). She thus suggested that the absence of age diversity had an impact on the kinds of social experiences represented. One may thus hope that a more age diverse parliament will account better for the age related plurality of concerns and experiences of disadvantage.

However, this argument that there is a correlation between age and ideas should not be misinterpreted in two ways. First, it does not imply that age interests are better indicators of how one may think or vote than other interests such as class interests. In fact, data shows that the impact of age on political ideas is not particularly striking. In the UK, young people vote for the three dominant parties in roughly the same percentage as their parents and grandparents (Cracknell, McGuinness, and Rhodes 2011, 42). Second, I do not mean to suggest that representatives do or should focus solely on issues that affect their own age groups. Young representatives should have their say on pension policies just like elderly representatives have their say on educational policies. The support for pensions among the young, for instance, is often

high, as attested for instance by the solidarity demonstrations in France in support for pensions in 2010. In fact, many surveys show that support for pensions systems barely varies between age groups (Van Parijs 1998, 297). Thus, to support youth quotas in parliaments, one does not need to argue that age matters more than class or that MPs of a certain age solely focus on defending the interests of their own age group. One simply needs to hope that representative institutions will only be more adapted if they represent a broader variety of age related perspectives on important social matters.

Another argument in favour of youth quotas is that there is an important risk that policies and debates will be driven by misrepresentations if conducted solely within some age groups in exclusion of another. If an age group is absent from the debates, their aspirations and problems may become distorted. French and British youth policies, for instance, can be said to have been driven, to a large extent on false representations and often unfair prejudices (Buckingham 2012; Howker and Malik 2010; Intergenerational Foundation 2012). There is a tendency in the media and amongst politicians alike to emphasize personal desert and render young people responsible for their own situation. Discourses on youth tend to revolve around their alleged laziness, bad attitude, and strong sense of entitlement (Jones 2011). Young people are asked to “stop whingeing, stop complaining, and just get on with it” (Malik and Howker 2010: 2), to take on their responsibilities, or “we should cut all your benefits and starve you into going back to work” (Lord Digby Jones in Malik and Howker 2010: 67). As the writers of *Jilted Generations* argue, there might be a resurgence of a Victorian ideology that sees laziness where there is poverty and disadvantage, and lack of personal commitment where there are structural and systemic issues: “like the working class of that era, we’re accused of profligacy and can’t seem to save our money (...) More than anything we’re vulnerable and yet the attitude of much of the society towards us is that we’re lazy and undeserving.” (Malik and Howker 2010: 69) The Intergenerational Foundation recently published a report on the perception of young people in European countries (Leach 2011). The results are quite compelling and account for the poor perception of younger people in the UK: “British people in their 20s achieved the lowest scores of any country in relation to being viewed with respect. (...) In terms of contempt, British people in their 20s came first.” (Leach 2011: 3).

If representatives underestimate, at best, and misrepresent as laziness, at worse, the challenges that young people are facing, then policies are likely to be inadequate. An example of the impact misrepresentations may have would be the denial of a means-tested minimum income guarantee to French Citizens under 25 years old. Since their introduction in 1988, minimum income guarantees in France have been restricted to citizens over the age of 25 years old. In 2009, the scheme was finally reformed to include young people under 25 years old, but with much more restrictive requirements. As a result, only very few young persons have access to a basic minimum income when they need it, while over 20% of French youth live in poverty. In fact, most arguments that were provided were either infantilizing or paternalistic: young people do not deserve it, they will be idle and lazy if they receive it, they do not really need it and they should not be given something for nothing (Bidadanure 2012). Perhaps if young persons had had a stronger voice, including stronger representatives, when this age-based discrimination⁵ pertained, it would have found more resistance. We may hope that bringing in more young persons in parliaments can have the modest impact of not leaving the misrepresentations unchallenged.

There is little evidence about the impact that the introduction of youth quotas can have, since they have not been implemented as such yet in any jurisdictions. However, an example that is quite illuminating is the case of the elderly in the past few decades. The poverty rates among the elderly have substantially decreased throughout western countries thanks to the introduction of various social security benefits, pensions schemes, and an ensemble of transport and housing benefits to prevent ends of lives to be lived in misery. This reduction in poverty rates has partly been rendered possible by the fact that the elderly have gained a stronger voting power. The interests of the elderly simply cannot be disregarded as they used to be in the past and the number of 65+ in parliaments reinforces this trend. As rich welfare states grew older, needs changed: “proportionally fewer children need education, fewer young adults need job training, but more elderly need health care and income support.” (Daniels 1988: 4)

⁵ The first version of the scheme, which completely excluded young people under 25 years old, was considered an illegitimate discrimination by the French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission.

The reason for introducing youth quotas does not have to be that age groups are in conflict against each other and that the generational struggle has replaced class struggle. As Daniels argues, “Changing needs find political expression. Strong voices press for reforms of the institutions which meet these needs. At the same time, advocates for existing institutions and their beneficiaries resist change. The result is a heightened sense that the old and the young are in conflict.” (Daniels 1988: 4) This is why many worry that institutions are shifting to the advantage of the elderly and to the disadvantage of younger cohorts. The absence of a youth voice is therefore particularly worrying. Young persons are going to represent a disproportionate and decreasing minority with little voting power and very few representatives. Therefore, it seems difficult to believe that their problems will find political expression if nothing is done about the procedures themselves. Youth quotas may provide a voice for young people within parliaments.

An important problem will remain: there is a fundamental distinction to be made between the underrepresentation of young people on the electors’ side, on the one hand, and on the representatives’ side, on the other. As Philippe Van Parijs argues, the key problem is that voters are aging; it is not just that parliaments are aging. Majoritarian democracies cannot represent fairly the interests of minority age groups and birth cohorts if their votes will never make a difference. In 2005, Ipsos MORI calculated that the voting power of the over 55 in the UK was worth over 4 times that of the 18-34 years old (Howker and Malik 2010, 157). This suggests that even if there are more young persons in parliaments, they will have to represent the interests of the elderly more than young people’s. Even with youth quotas in parliaments, youth interests may still get sidelined.

This leads us to another important argument in favour of youth quotas. So far, my argument revolved around the view that there is a likely impact of a certain kind of “presence” in parliaments on the “ideas” that will be expressed. I have tried to show, like defenders of gender or ethnic quotas, that there is often a correlation between the demographic features of candidates and their political interests and ideas. However, a certain kind of presence is no “guarantee” as such of certain kinds of ideas being

expressed and of certain policies being implemented. Some men might be better at advancing the cause of women than some women will, for ideological reasons. In the same way, for ideological reasons and because of how majoritarian representative democracies work, it is likely to be the case that a younger presence will only have a limited impact on our objective B being achieved.

However, even if the impact is not absolute, one can say that there is another fundamental reason why youth quotas should be implemented: there is a symbolic importance of a certain kind of presence for social cohesion and democracy (Philips 1995). There is a strong symbolic value of having a diverse parliament with people from all geographical origins, ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, occupations and indeed age. The more varied parliaments are, the more people will feel that they live in a community of equals and be driven to engage and participate. We need women in parliaments regardless of whether they will advance the cause of women. We need ethnic minorities regardless of whether they will in fact have a concrete positive impact on antiracism. We may hope that it will be the case and this may give us extra reasons for implementing quotas in general, but the instrumental justification based on politics of ideas is not the only reason.

Moreover, I have argued in the first section that one of the key aspects of intergenerational justice is “synchronic relational equality”: people of all ages being able to stand in front of each other as equals without risk of domination, oppression, stigmatisation or other relationships of inequality. Political equality and the involvement of each age group in social and political decision-making is a very important side of relational equality. A vast portion of the young generation is already excluded from the work force. As Guy Standing puts it, they crucially need a political voice of some sort (Standing 2011, 78). The presence of some of them in parliaments may not change everything, but it may be a strong symbolic gesture to reengage young people in political communities. The young, unemployed, poor and disengaged need all the help they can get to have a voice and get their interests heard. Youth quotas can contribute to giving more resonance to their voice. It could consist in a demonstration of “public acknowledgment of equal value”, to borrow Charles Taylor’s expression (Taylor in Philips 1995, 40).

The philosopher Anne Philips separates two reasons in support of quotas for underrepresented groups: *political control* – their interests are likely to be better served by themselves; and *political equality* – because they have a right to self-determination like everyone else. She argues: “On the face of it, at least, these two principles of popular control and political equality provide a good basis for the politics of presence. Control is just a pious aspiration unless people are actually there; equality is hardly achieved when some groups have so much more leverage than others.” (Philips 1995, 30) The various reasons why youth quotas should be introduced in parliaments that I have pointed to in the last section fall under these two categories. An age diverse parliament is likely to account better for the age related plurality of concerns and experiences (political control); the presence of youth quotas could reduce the impact of misrepresentations and prejudices on young people on policymaking (political control); the presence of disengaged social groups in parliament is symbolically important for social cohesion and their absence conflicts with relational equality (political equality). My two first arguments relied on the likely connection between the presence of young people in parliaments and the objective B it could promote. However, even if it turned out that young people were not incredibly better at defending youth interests, the view that relational equality demands that no age group be politically marginalized would still apply. As far as political equality is concerned, Anne Philips argues, “empirical information about actual consequences is regarded as largely beside the point.” (Philips 1995, 33) For these two kinds of reasons, the implementation of youth quotas is desirable.

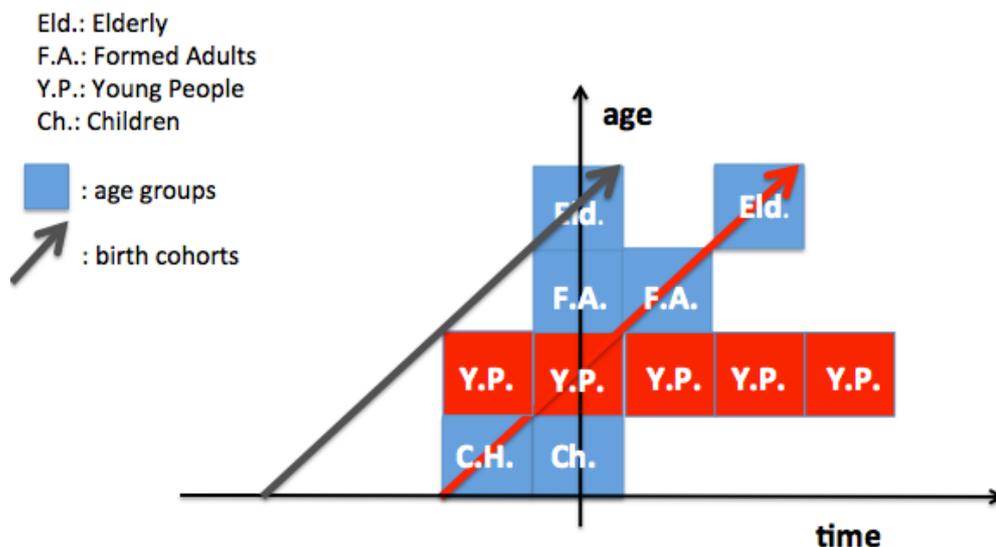
As outlined in section 1, we ought to seriously consider implementing policies that bring us closer to the critical goals A and B. Youth quotas in parliaments are likely to be one of these, for a multiplicity of reasons, as I have argued. The remaining zone of obscurity I want to explore now is the question of the *implementation* of youth quotas in parliaments. I want to suggest that there are at least two types of youth quotas and discuss their respective implementation. I will argue that, in order to increase our chances of reaching objectives A and B, we may need both cohort and age group quotas.

Section III – Implementation: two types of youth quotas.

A fundamental distinction can in fact be made between two types of youth quotas: age quotas and cohort quotas. In short, we can either introduce quotas to make sure that there is always a certain number of young people in parliaments, or we can introduce cohort quotas to make sure that minority cohorts like the ‘jilted generation’ get fairly represented throughout their lives. Let us present what these two types of quotas could be like and which one could most plausibly work towards which goal.

(1) Age quotas versus cohort quotas

The following diagram illustrates the fundamental difference between age groups and birth cohorts:

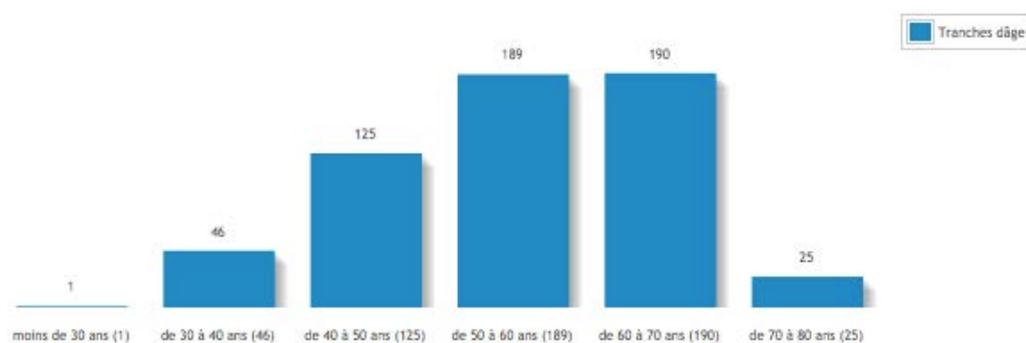


6

Age groups are represented as boxes and birth cohorts as arrows. Birth cohorts are groups of people born at a given time who are ageing together (for instance the baby boomers) while an age group is a group of people at a certain stage of their lives (for instance the elderly). Implementing age group quotas for young people would consist in having, at any time a certain number of MPs under the age of 30 (or 35) years old.

⁶ This diagram is inspired by the Lexis diagram, used by demographers to represent the three effects of time: age, period and cohort effects.

We could for instance say that at any time there always needs to be over 30 or 50 young people in national⁷ parliaments. Implementing cohort quotas on the other hand, would consist in having a certain number of seats reserved for each cohort. The idea here would be to protect some minority cohort from their interests being underrepresented. If we consider that at any given time there are about four voting birth cohorts (for instance currently the baby boomers generation, their parents, generation X and generation Y) then we should consider that none of these generations may have fewer representatives than 50 (for instance). Consider the following age composition of the French Parliament.



8

This diagram represents the number of MPs per age group. Even though it represents age groups, it gives us information about how different birth cohorts are being represented: the baby boomers, born in approximately 1946/64 are between 50 and 68 now. They clearly represent the most represented cohort. We must now separate the age effect from the cohort effect. It is likely to be the case that most MPs will always be between 40 and 70 years old. Older MPs will perhaps consider that they cannot keep up with the position's workload and younger MPs will perhaps feel like they want to gain more experience first, including studies, trainings and jobs. If this trend remains over time, then different cohorts will be represented fairly over their whole lives. In this case we would not need cohort quotas. However, if it turned out that minority cohorts were underrepresented over time, introducing cohort quotas could be an interesting option. It could guarantee that representations do not become too disproportionate by securing a minimum number of seats to avoid majority

⁷ This could also apply to the European parliament.

⁸ Nationale, Assemblée. *Liste des députés par âge* 2012 [cited 25.05.2013. Available from <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/qui/xml/age.asp?legislature=14>.

generations getting a much better representation of their interests over their complete lives.

Would the two objectives A and B I have identified be better served by age group or cohort quotas? In other words, ought we to implement quotas so as to always have young people in parliaments or should we implement cohort quotas to make sure that minority cohorts get represented fairly?

(2) Which quotas will increase our chances to meet objective A?

The answer to this question is quite straightforward. As we have shown earlier, if young people can be thought of as the trustees of posterity, then what we need is to make sure that there are always several young people in parliament. No particular cohort will have a higher stake in long-term issues simply by the fact of being a particular cohort. However, young age, as argued earlier, may be hoped to have an impact on a higher and fiercer concern for longer-term issues.

One might ask how explicitly young people must be assigned the responsibility of representing the interests of future generations. This could have the negative impact of disengaging other age groups from such concerns, as it would seem like there is a group of representatives already in charge of representing long-term interests. The urgency of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are so high that all representatives should integrate concerns for future generations. It might therefore be that young persons in parliaments should not be explicitly invested with this mission of representing future generations, but that this may be an extra reason to believe that youth quotas should be implemented.

Youth quotas in parliaments may be coupled with the institutionalisation of representatives for future generations. Future generations have no political voice so far, and the stake is so high that we cannot count on the benevolence of representatives of the present to integrate their interests sufficiently. The Ombudsman for future generations in Hungary for instance, is directly in charge of the two tasks of protecting the environment and representing the interests of future generations.

Radical changes are likely to be unpopular so there must always be a number of representatives whose role is to voice and defend the interests of future generations within parliamentary institutions. Youth quotas in parliaments and MPs for future generations could thus both be implemented in parallel.

(3) Which quotas will increase our chances of meeting objective B?

When it comes to introducing youth quotas to increase our chances to represent the interests of young people fairly and to end social problems like youth unemployment, poverty and exclusion, the question of which quotas are most appropriate is not as straightforward.

Age quotas could help in accounting better for the experiences and interests of the young, because, as we have argued, a diversity of age-related experiences is likely to improve the understanding of challenges faced by different age groups. Moreover, symbolically, as argued earlier, it could indicate a will to encourage young people in voting, voicing their concerns and participating politically. Age quotas could be defended both on grounds of political control and equality. Furthermore, since society is aging, the young of today are also likely to be a majority over the generation of their children or grandchildren. As people live longer, have fewer children and wait longer to have children, this unequal balance of power between young and old is likely to persist over time. We will thus need age quotas to prevent young people, as an age group, from getting sidelined.

However, the various problems we have identified also have a cohortal dimension. The problem is not only the political absence of young people, as an age group, it is their exclusion, as a birth cohort. Both problems currently overlap, but over time, two different problems might develop. The baby boomers, as a majoritarian generation, will still have disproportionate power over the next generation, even when they will not be 'young' anymore. To gain and keep power, politicians are likely to shift their policies towards the interests of the growing majority of pensioners and to neglect the interests of younger members of society. It is not that there is a conscious plot by the baby-boomers to disregard the interests of their children. The fault lies with the way

our majoritarian systems are framed. As Malik and Howker explain, there is a “skewing of policy away from the interests of the jilted generation and towards those of their parents – not by any conscious effort by voters, but simply because of the numbers.” (Howker and Malik 2010, 157) The result is a risk that institutions that meet the needs of different age groups will be framed according to this concern for pleasing the majority cohort rather than based on what is prudent, urgent, fair or sustainable. Implementing cohort quotas can help in making sure that there are at least a certain number of members of the minority cohort in parliament at any given time and may thus lower the risk of political exclusion.

Another argument in favour of cohort quotas is the impact of phenomena like the clustering of disadvantage and the scarring effect on the members of the jilted generation over their complete lives. As shown earlier, the members of this generation are expected to fare relatively worse over their complete lives. High rates of poverty, unemployment and disengagement from politics at a young age are likely to be correlated with further experiences of unemployment, poverty and exclusion throughout the lifespan. Institutions should give a voice to particularly impaired cohorts. If it turned out that there were very few members of the jilted generation present in parliaments in the coming decades, then cohort quotas would need to be implemented to protect their voice and political expression. As Chauvel argues, in majoritarian democracies, the key risk is that some cohorts doubly gain while other doubly lose. This fundamental cohortal problem will always be a likely outcome of societies whose demography is unbalanced. Legally enforcing a minimum number of representatives in parliaments for each cohort could contribute in avoiding too large inequalities in the way benefits and burdens are shared across cohorts.

A comparison with another policy example may help in understanding this distinction between cohort and age effects. I suggested in a previous paragraph that a universal basic income at level of subsistence for young people could be a way to protect the young from poverty and render experiences of unemployment less stigmatising and discouraging, as there would be a series of other activities that could be open to them (such as volunteering, internships, political engagement, or running one’s own business). Perhaps a universal basic income would not only be needed for young

people, as an age group, but also for the jilted generation, as a birth cohort. It would work as a safety net throughout the cohort's lifespan and help in compensating for the long-term consequences of earlier precarious years. Indeed, if we focus on the phenomenon of the scarring effect and variety of potential negative consequences youth poverty and disengagement can have over a lifespan, then long-term attention and support seems required: cohort quotas could therefore be an interesting option to solve this fundamentally cohortal problem.

In practice, we could attend to both the long-term environmental, cohortal and age group problems by introducing quotas for young people now. But the jilted generation, as we have just shown, will not be young for decades and may still need its interests to be protected later on. Could the solution be to implement both types of quotas in practice? We could both enforce a given minimum number of young people in parliaments and also a minimum number of MPs for cohorts that are underrepresented in parliaments. If we are really committed to getting closer to objectives A and B, we must seriously consider implementing both types of quotas. If it turns out that the jilted generation is underrepresented in parliamentary institutions in the coming decades, cohort quotas will have to be seriously considered to avoid the political exclusion of this minority cohort over its complete life⁹.

Section IV – Conclusion: youth quotas in parliaments as demands of intergenerational justice.

In this paper, I have shown that we can isolate two strong demands of intergenerational justice: (A) affording a better standard of living to future generations (mainly through promoting environmental sustainability) and (B) improving the

⁹ Note that, in practice, these could take the form of age quotas for the jilted generation's members, as they age. If it turned out that there was a very low number of 40 years old MPs in 20 years and then a very low number of 60 years old MPs in 40 years, then the political inclusion of the jilted generation would have been threatened for their entire lives. Since age is an indicator of the birth cohort one belongs to, cohort quotas might turn out to be implemented *through age*: the best way to implement these cohort quotas may perhaps be to set a minimum number of 40 years old and then a minimum number of 60 years old MPs (if a problem arises in terms of their representation). Such quotas would still be cohort quotas, as they would serve to reduce the impact of a fundamentally cohortal problem. They may count as age quotas insofar as they use age as an indicator for the cohort one belongs to, and insofar as one can always use arguments based on the concrete and symbolic need for age-diversity in parliaments to support them.

situation of young people (including by tackling youth unemployment, poverty and exclusion). I have shown that the interests of future and younger generations are not taken seriously enough and I have explained why their current prospects are very worrying. I have then tried to show that both objectives (A) and (B) can be promoted through the introduction of youth quotas in parliaments.

For objective (A), I have suggested that young people can be considered as the “trustees of posterity”, as Disraeli once suggested. Young people are likely to be fiercer defenders of longtermist policies since the environmental crisis will have a concrete impact on their lifespan. Moreover, it is very likely that more intergenerational parliaments will be better at solving problems in an innovative way, as the literature on the benefits of intergenerational practices suggests. There is some mitigating evidence that suggests that current young people may not be as “green” as a romanticized view of young people as trustees of posterity may make them look like. I concluded that we should not be naïve about the prospects of youth quotas for promoting the interests of future generations but that there are at least two strong reasons to implement them – namely the expertise of legislative institutions that intergenerational cooperation may foster and the high stake in long-term issues long people have. I also suggested that the contradicting evidence might not be due to an age effect but to a cohort effect and might thus not even weaken the view that young people are the trustees of posterity. In the following section, I have argued that we should therefore implement age quotas in parliaments for young people on longtermist grounds and that this should not prevent us from also implementing a more direct system of representation for future generations in addition (like the Hungarian Ombudsman for future generations).

For objective (B), I pointed to the importance of the age effect for experiences of the same period effects. As a result, I argued that having more young people in parliaments would increase our chances to promote youth interests. Second, a youth presence in parliaments would make it more unlikely for policymakers to be driven by false representations and prejudices. Drawing on Anne Philips, I showed that these two instrumental arguments in favor of youth quotas were based on the view that there is a very likely correlation between a certain kind of presence in parliaments and

the ideas that will be developed. Quotas may thus be defended as providing young people with a certain “political control”. I then argued that there is another strong reason (non-instrumental) to object to the underrepresentation of youth in parliaments and defend the introduction of youth quotas: “political equality”. I argued that the involvement of each age group in social and political decision-making is a crucial side of relational equality and that youth quotas could symbolically acknowledge the equal political value of young people, as members of a community of equals. I then proposed the implementation of both age group and birth cohort quotas in parliaments to promote objective B. In fact, if age quotas are fundamental to protect youth inclusion in society and to improve our chances to end youth unemployment and poverty, we may also need quotas for minority cohorts. Indeed, the “jilted generation” is likely to fare worse than the previous generation over their complete lives, as the phenomenon of the scarring effect develops. They could remain a poorer and politically less visible generation, as policies skew towards the majority cohort’s current age interest. The solution of cohort quotas should be considered to prevent their long-term sidelining.

In conclusion, if intergenerational justice is defined through this double overlapping and non-overlapping challenge of meeting objectives (A) and (B), then I have shown that justice demands that we implement youth quotas in parliaments. The likeliness of the positive outcomes such quotas would bring about makes it a very desirable policy: let us implement youth quotas in parliaments, and we will have *better* procedures and also, most probably, *fairer* outcomes. But even regardless of such outcomes, there are strong reasons to find the underrepresentation of youth in politics worrying from the point of view of social cohesion and political equality: let us then also defend youth quotas in parliaments as a way to make procedures *fairer*, i.e. more relationally cohesive and politically equal.

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