

Symposium 2013

Academic Symposium on "Youth Quotas - The Answer to Changes in Age Demographics?"

25/26 October 2013, Stuttgart (Germany)

The aim of the academic symposium was to give an answer to the question whether "Youth Quotas" provide a solution to changes in age demographics and a looming gerontocracy. Based on the premise that young people have the potential to act as change agents, especially with regard to ecological sustainability, it was our aim to stimulate a societal discussion and to raise public awareness on the topic of "Youth Quotas", whilst providing the discussion with a scientific basis.

The question of a power shift between generations is already discussed in many facets in the literature. Many commentators state that a shift is already visible and that the problem requires careful political management. In this sense, the implementation of youth quotas could be a possible method of protecting the interests of younger generations in politics and beyond in light of the purported power shift. The symposium investigated a topic that is greatly under-researched.

Some key questions to be addressed at the symposium were: Should "Youth Quotas" be limited to the political arena (political parties, parliaments, etc.) or should they also be implemented in other fields (economy, companies, associations, organizations, etc.)? Can "Youth Quotas" ensure that an additional sense of urgency is included in the problem-solving process of future problems like global warming? Will young people really represent the interests of the young generation as a whole, or will they just follow their own individual interests? Are "Youth Quotas" in general an effective instrument to strengthen the rights of the young generation or do we need other and more effective instruments?

It was contested whether or not "Youth Quotas" are an effective means to strengthen the rights of following generations. Some junior scientists suggested that young people can be thought of as the "trustees of posterity"; as they tend to be fiercer defenders of long-termist policies since the environmental crisis will have a more concrete impact on their lifespan.

But other speakers rejected the causality that young people will have a stronger determination to solve future problems, and that they will add a new "young" perspective in the epistemic process of finding solutions to future problems. The indication by these speakers was that environmental issues are not the top priority of young people.

Regarding the composition of party lists, one speaker pointed to the problem of legitimacy of the outcome of an election. The positive

discrimination of youth within a societal group has to be justified because other groups could feel disadvantaged by the implementation of such a strong instrument. Some speakers challenged the analogy of "Youth Quotas" to quotas for women or ethnic minorities, because women and ethnic minorities can't change their status whereas today's young people, in the normal course of life, will be the old people in the future. This means that the disadvantage of a person in his or her young age is just temporal. Generational effects were pitted against age effects in this context.

Some experts pointed to alternatives to "Youth Quotas". Lowering the voting age and better political education in schools, especially, would produce better results according to their view. Another strategy was seen in the implementation of proxy votes for the parents.

A vote at the end of the symposium showed interesting results: Although several problems were noted, most of the speakers voted for the implementation of "Youth Quotas". All speakers voted for lowering the voting age. The conclusion reached by the academic symposium is that a package of measures is required, to give adequate answers to demographic change. "Youth Quotas" could be part of this package.

For more information see the description of the scientific content.

Conference program:

First Day (Friday, 25 October 2013)

14:30: Welcome from the Organizers - Dr. Bettina Munimus (FRFG), Antony Mason (IF)

15:00: Prof. Dr. Dr. Dieter Birnbacher - Future Generations: Institutional Arrangements should be motivated by Considerations of Motivation

15:45: Dr. Alexander Bagattini - Children, Age-Based Discrimination, and the Voting Age

16:30: Prof. Dr. Dr. Jörg Tremmel (Jun. Prof.) - Democracy or Epistocracy? Age as Criterion for the Suffrage

17:45: Anja Karnein, PhD - The Hopes and Limitations of Asking the Young to be Green

18:30: Dr. Ivo Wallimann-Helmer - Who Should Save Our Planet from Environmental Disaster? Science, Youth or Common Citizens?

Second Day (Saturday, 26 October 2013)

09:30: Dr. Dominic Roser - Could the Promotion of Youth Quotas Initiate a Measurable Change in Environmental Policy?

10:15: Heiko Burret - Benovolent Politicians through Youth Quotas? A Public Choice Analysis

11:00: Dr. Rafael Ziegler - Young People as Change Agents for Sustainability? Lessons from a Collaborative Youth Campaign for the Youth Quota Proposal

11:45: Dr. Radostin Kaloianov - The Ubiquity of Quotas – what can quotas do?

13:30: Dr. Pieter Vanhuyse - Giving Children Proxy Votes: A New Defence in Light of the Intergenerational Justice Index

14:15: Juliana Bidadanure - Better Procedures for Fairer Outcomes: Are Youth Quotas Required by Intergenerational Justice?

15:00: Fatema Jahan - ‘Youth Quotas and Youth-i-zation’ Or ‘Youth Leadership and Youth Movement’? – A response to age demographics

15:45: Tobias Hainz - The Logic of Quotas and Discrimination

16:20: Elias Naumann, Moritz Heß - The Intergenerational Conflict in Europe – Demand for a Youth Quota?

17:45: Panel Discussion

Moderated by Ashley Seager, Antony Mason, Adrian Schell, Bernhard Winkler, Yvonne Eich and Danyal Bayaz

19:30: Dinner Speech

Prof. Dr. Marcel Wissenburg - Justice and Youth Quotas: Comments from a Libertarian Perspective

21:00: End of Symposium

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