



Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations

Newcomer quotas in political parties and parliaments

Why the representation of young people through quotas is necessary



Abstract

In Germany and most other industrial nations, the proportion of young people is steadily decreasing compared to the number of older people. This demographic change has profound effects on social coexistence and political agenda setting. Against this background, there is reason to fear that the interests of the younger generation will no longer be adequately taken into account. This assumption is supported by the under-representation of young people in key decision-making bodies. The Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (SRzG) is therefore calling in particular for binding quotas for newcomers and youth in order to counteract the marginalisation of young people and enable them to participate actively and to co-determine political and social decision-making processes.

Responding to the challenges of the 21st century is a cross-generational project in which both young and old are required to contribute their knowledge and ideas in equal measure. However, the opinions and views of the young population – the generation most affected by the consequences of today's decisions – remain largely unnoticed. Newcomer and youth quotas are instruments for mitigating this imbalance and laying the foundations for a future- and sustainability-oriented politics. Quotas would ensure that the younger generation has a firm voice in the political decision-making process.

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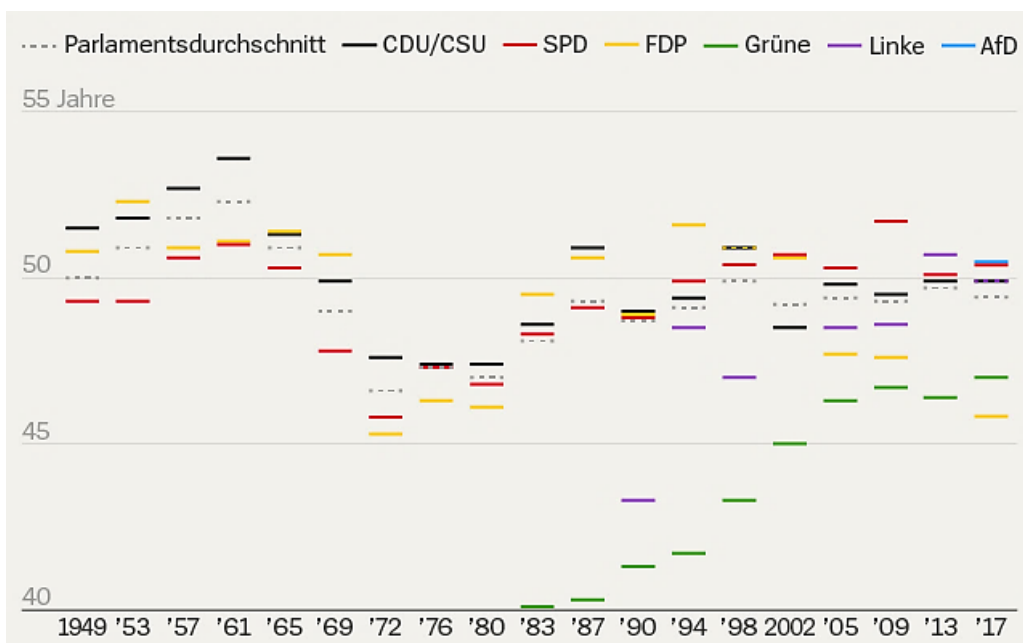
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1. Unequal participation in decision-making

In industrial nations, the proportion of older people in comparison to young people is rising continuously. Whereas in 2013 people aged 65 or more accounted for almost 20 percent of the German population, in 2060 – according to a projection by the Federal Statistical Office (2015: 45-52) – their share will be between 30 and 34 percent.

This development is already today reflected at the political level. The data on the age structure of members of parliament give an indication of the small number of young people in the German Parliament. Currently, 40 out of 709 MPs (5.64 percent) are under 35 years of age¹. However, the proportion of 18 to 35-year-olds in the total population is around 20 percent. The trend since the 1970s has been towards an increasingly older parliament, even if the current Bundestag is somewhat younger than, for example, 1998, as Fig. 1 shows.

Fig.1: Average age of the members of the parliamentary groups in the 19th Bundestag



Source: Evaluation of SPIEGEL; Figures based on data provided by the Federal Election Commissioner <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bundestag-konstituiert-sich-das-ist-das-neue-parlament-a-1174308.html>

In 2014, the average age of party members of the Left Party was 60 years, of CDU and SPD 59 years, of CSU 58 years, of FDP 54 years and of the Green Party 49 years (Statista 2015). This weak representation of young people in parliaments and parties carries the danger that topics of the young generation cannot be adequately articulated. Their discourses do not make it onto political agendas. This contributes to the fact that young people and their interests are not sufficiently represented by the current system at the political level. Accord-

¹ Cf. data manual of the German Bundestag; age and social structure; average age; https://www.bundestag.de/blob/272472/845a43854fa9800086b66825b7d5cd73/kapitel_03_01_altersgliederung-pdf-data.pdf. At the time of the constitution of the 19th German Bundestag, the figure was 9.3 percent (66 MPs).

ing to the theory of descriptive representation² it is necessary for effective representation that the socio-cultural profiles of the members of parliament and of the population are similar. Imagine a parliament in which, for example, only old, white, wealthy and religious men sit. Could such a parliament really claim to represent the interests of citizens of other characteristics?

The political age structure in Germany, in combination with the current political system, represents a major socio-political challenge³. Former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker has already attested to the tendency of democratic regimes to "glorify the present and neglect the future" (Weizsäcker 1998: 53)⁴. According to Dennis Thompson (2010), there are three main reasons for this. First, people tend to prefer short-term advantages to long-term ones. Secondly, the short electoral periods and the desire for re-election promote a policy geared to presentable results. Thirdly, the democracies of industrialised countries tend to favour the concerns of the older population because of their numerical domination with regard to election results.

Through periodically recurring elections, parties and parliaments are virtually forced to give priority to matters that promise electoral success, i.e. produce quick and concrete results. The political horizon of action is therefore oriented towards election periods. In the campaign for votes, each party must concentrate on the preferences of the current electorate, because future voters do not yet have any votes today (Tremmel 2014: 38). In the 2013 Bundestag elections, the median age of voters exceeded the age of 50 for the first time (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2014a: 6). This means that more than half of the potential voters were 50 years or older. The lack of representation of the young generation means that decisions are not made by the majority of voters affected in the remaining years of their lives, but by the majority of those entitled to vote. From this it becomes evident that – together with the low participation of young people in political committee work – future questions and the concerns of the young generation remain several times ignored and unheard.

A look into the Bundestag and the political parties shows that young people with their fresh ideas and approaches are hardly given – serious – room to participate. This imbalance is due to various causes. The lack of network contacts and financial means to conduct one's own election campaign is becoming an exclusion criterion for young people. In consequence, young politicians are inhibited by an invisible barrier (glass ceiling).

It therefore seems urgently necessary to establish the participation of the young generation institutionally, by means of a quota.

² The term derives from Hanna Pitkin (1967).

³ Cf. Tremmel 2018: 109-111: Research on institutional responses to the 'present preference' of democracies has recently gained momentum. In 2016/2017 alone, four remarkable new publications appeared: *Governing for the future* (J. Boston); *Institutions for future generations* (González-Ricoy/Gosseries); *Future generations in today's democracy* (M. Rose) and *The Representation of Non-Voice Parties in Democracies* (L. Köhler).

⁴ Original text: „Verherrlichung der Gegenwart und der Vernachlässigung der Zukunft“

2. How should the quota system be structured?

2.1. The terms 'newcomer quota' and 'youth quota'

In principle, the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (SRzG) advocates procedures that are oriented towards the goals of long-term orientation and responsibility for the future. In view of the low representation of the younger generation, we propose **establishing newcomer and youth quotas** in relevant decision-making bodies. When we talk about quotas in the following, they generally refer to a corresponding procedure for access to a particular system⁵. In a **quota system for political participation**, age limits are required. It seems reasonable to set the lower limit at an age of 18 years – this corresponds to the current minimum age at which one can stand as a candidate at elections in Germany (passive voting right)⁶. The upper limit is set at an age of 35 years. People at the age of 18-35 are no longer adolescents. Therefore, when it comes to quotas in parliaments or political parties – and thus to access to the political system – the term '**newcomer quota**' is used from now on.

In view of demographic change, a debate on the establishment of quotas is also worthwhile outside the political sphere, for example in **social, economic and media forums**, in order to ensure the participation of the younger generation in these areas. Since there is no passive voting age limit here and all people have a fundamental right to participation and co-determination, these contexts speak of a **youth quota**. The term 'youth quota' is therefore used in the following whenever there is no lower age limit.

2.2. Newcomer quotas in party lists

The way to get young people into parliament in Germany (as in many, if not all, other democracies) is via parties⁷. In the end it is the parliament, not the parties, that the quota regulation is aimed at. But of course the parliament is composed of the candidates nominated by the parties according to the election results. The **nomination of candidates** for the German parties usually takes place internally in the run-up to Landtag or Bundestag elections. The names of the candidates and their precedence are determined by a pre-determined party committee. This means that to the voters of federal and state parliamentary elections there are usually not individual persons for voting available, but only the whole list of a party. The proportion of young people aged between 18 and 35 in Germany is currently around 20 percent, but only 5 percent of all members of the German Bundestag are under

⁵ In contrast to women's quotas, there is so far very little literature on newcomer quotas for parliaments and parties. Pioneering works are Bidadanure 2014; Trantidis 2016; Tozer 2018; the biennial studies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union "Youth participation in national parliaments" (last published 2018), the anthology of Tremmel et al. 2015, as well as the special issue of the Intergenerational Justice Review on this topic (issue 1/2015; Vol 1). Leif (2010: 436) has called for a youth quota for Germany.

⁶ At this point, reference will be made to the SRzG position paper on "Voting rights for young people and older children". See also https://generationengerechtigkeit.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PP-Wahlrecht_2018.pdf

⁷ In Baden-Württemberg and Saarland there is a personalised proportional election without lists and voters only have one vote in state elections.

35. The representation of the young generation in parliament is thus significantly lower than its share of the total population. In the **list of parties** at state and federal level, **20 percent** of the promising places should therefore be filled by people between the ages of 18 and 35⁸. Hard quotas should be introduced as far as possible; if necessary, parties can initially decide on a soft quota until they have recruited more young candidates. A hard quota means that if there are not enough candidates available to fill the places, the same number of unquoted places are not be filled. In contrast a soft quota means that, due to a lack of candidates, unfilled quota places remain vacant, but simultaneously the unquoted places are further filled⁹.

In addition, the **Cabinet** at federal and state level shall also have a **20 percent** quota for newcomers.

The federal and state election laws impose special regulations on the parties for the nomination of candidates (Korte 2009: 62). It would be desirable to include a regulation in the legislative texts on the mandatory application of a newcomer quota in the amount of the relevant proportion of the population. This would mean that all parties would have to introduce a quota in equal measure. As already in various countries abroad (see Tab. 1), a legal regulation would ensure that the number of MPs under 35 in the Bundestag and in the Landtage would really increase in Germany. In the same manner, the **composition of the Cabinet** at federal and state level could be established. It is to be discussed whether for cabinets a newcomer quota is obligatorily written down both in the German constitution – which regulates the list of the federal cabinet – and in the constitutions of the Lands of the Federal Republic – which prescribe accordingly the composition of the Land cabinets. It is also to be hoped that this regulation will also have an effect on **parliamentary bodies**, so that committees and working groups will benefit from it, too. One example is the Committee on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Even though most people only talk about the Family Committee, it is an important task of this committee to strengthen the position of young people. Young members of the parliament should have a say here as representatives of the age group concerned. Another example is the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, which was set up in 2004 and is to accompany the national sustainability strategy of the Federal Government in a parliamentary manner. Since the Advisory Council is to be an "advocate of long-term responsibility in political life" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2014a: 35, translated by SRzG)¹⁰, it would be particularly desirable to achieve greater participation by young members of parliament.

⁸ It is obvious that the percentage of the rate must be based on the actual share of the young generation in the total population. But how can "young generation" (as part of the total population) be meaningfully defined? There is no reason to assume that 18-35-year-olds can better represent the interests of children than over-35-year-olds. Therefore, the reference group in the total population is the proportion of 18-35-year-olds and not the proportion of under-35-year-olds in Germany.

⁹ Tobias Hainz (2014: 50) explains this in detail.

¹⁰ Original text: „Anwalt langfristiger Verantwortung im politischen Geschehen“.

2.3. Youth quotas in extra-parliamentary and extra-political areas

Comparable to the demand for newcomer quotas, **more co-determination** should also be **granted to young people** in relevant non-parliamentary committees. It is conceivable, for example, that the German broadcasting corporations would apply a youth quota in the composition of the respective broadcasting councils. In the case of public television and radio stations, the so-called **Broadcasting Council** is usually the supreme body for programme control. It should ensure that programmes are open to various social groups and, at best, cover their interests. In addition the advice consists of members respectively representatives of different social groupings – for example the nature conservation federation, trade unions, business enterprises or churches. The size of the committees varies. A glance at the various broadcasting councils shows that youth representatives are far from being present in all committees. It is conceivable here to reserve a **portion of the seats for young people under the age of 35**. The corresponding proportion of seats would depend on the size of the committee and the seats to be allocated. Broadcasters could apply a youth quota of their own accord to include the opinions and ideas of the younger generation. This would send a strong signal to society and politics. It should also be assumed that a greater appeal to the younger generation is also in the interest of media makers.

The **Council for Sustainable Development** – which was first appointed by the Federal Government in 2001 – has the task of advancing the content of the German sustainability strategy by advising the Federal Government and implementing it through the design of projects. A glance at the members of the Council shows that there are neither youth representatives nor any persons under the age of 35¹¹. The German Council for Sustainable Development aims to promote social cohesion in society in an integrated manner through sustainability policy. With such a policy, it is essential that those who will be most affected by the decisions taken today in the future are given a say. Not involving or hardly involving the young generation has a disintegrating effect. In order to guarantee participation in decisions on the national sustainability strategy, a youth quota should also be introduced in the Council for Sustainable Development so that a certain **number of seats are allocated to people less than 35 years of age** to represent the interests of the younger generation¹². The Council was convened in 2001 by the then Federal Government. The composition of the Council continues to be a matter of executive power, so that an appointment or non-appointment of young people is primarily up to the relevant federal government.

¹¹ For members see <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/der-rat/mitglieder-des-rates/> (20.12.2018).

¹² This does not affect the demand to appoint representatives of the generation(s) of descendants – and not yet born – in key social and political decision-making bodies, to include them in debates and to endow them with the right to vote, cf. SRzG position paper "Seven building blocks for a more future-oriented democracy". https://generationengerechtigkeit.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PP_Bausteine-f%C3%BCr-eine-zukunftsgerechte-Demokratie.pdf

3. Why does it make sense for young people to be in Parliament?

The instrument of quotas is rather controversial in democratic societies. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that quotas can help to protect minorities from having their interests and concerns underestimated or marginalised. The discussion about women's quotas has clearly shown the area of tension. The fact that young people do not remain permanently young should not prevent politics and society from devoting sufficient attention to the concerns of the respective youth generation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, a forum of all parliaments in the world, demands (2018: 27): "Governments, parliaments and political parties should consider introducing newcomer quotas to enhance the selection and promotion of young candidates and adopting lower age thresholds to help more politicians in their 20s and 30s get elected". The following list is intended to show the additional benefits that an increased proportion of young parliamentarians would bring – through quotas.

3.1. Mitigating the short-term orientation of politics

The temporal disintegration of events whose foundations are laid by today's generation but whose effects only affect future generations creates a representation gap. To put it in the words of Ivo Wallimann-Helmer, those who have to bear the long-term consequences should

"[...] have an appropriate, if not disproportionate, weight in the decision-making process when deciding whether or not to take the associated risks." (Wallimann-Helmer 2015: 247, translated by SRzG)¹³.

Young people have one thing in common: a long remaining life expectancy and, as a result, being affected by the long-term effects of today's politics, for better or for worse. This common characteristic results in a group interest in forward-looking, future-oriented politics.

3.2. Incorporating (fresh) ideas and solutions

The newcomer quota would guarantee the inclusion of age-related views in the ideas of political parties (Bidadanure 2014; 2015) and would ensure that the concerns and ideas of the younger generation stemming from their own lives would be put on the political agenda and thus be the subject of debate. An appropriate proportion of young people in parliament is likely to increase the weight of unconventional and innovative ideas. If young people, as an essential part of society, are not involved in political debates and decision-making processes, their thoughts and ideas will be largely excluded and knowledge will not be made available¹⁴. Our society faces major challenges to digitisation – it would be negligent to

¹³ Original text: „[...] bei der Entscheidung darüber, ob die damit einhergehenden Risiken eingegangen werden sollen oder nicht, ein angemessenes, wenn nicht gar überproportionales Gewicht im Entscheidungsprozess haben.“

¹⁴ In the words of the IPU (2018, 22): "Greater numbers of young people can also invigorate policy deliberations. They can bring newness and freshness to political debates, being perhaps more anxious to resolve problems than longer-serving MPs."

disregard the knowledge of young people (digital natives). New answers are also urgently needed in the area of sustainability. In the Anthropocene, many solutions that were appropriate for the Holocene are no longer effective. A sufficiently heterogeneous parliament in terms of age enables better deliberation. Young people can propose solutions that no one else would have come up with.

3.3.Improving the acceptance of decisions

"Making those affected into participants" is a credo for social peace and integration. Due to demographic change, for example, our society is facing decisions in pension and nursing care policy that are likely to be painful for the coming generations. The rate of young people would be an instrument to strengthen the legitimacy of such hard decisions and to increase the approval of young people in the population as a whole for decisions taken. Parliaments with greater age diversity would create a society in which no age group feels excluded, thus strengthening democratic governance as a whole.

3.4.Setting an example

Young people are often given the impression that their arguments and concerns cannot be taken seriously. A newcomer quota would signal to society and especially to young people that their participation is valued. This would recognise the status of the young generation as equal citizens (Bidadanure 2015). "Nothing harms a young person more than the feeling of not finding a place, not being needed and being excluded from society," the former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker once said (Herr/Speer 2015, translated by SRzG)³⁵. The representation of the young generation in political bodies can also make a significant contribution to the positive self-image of young people.

3.5.Increasing participation and interest

The quota regulation would help the young generation to see its ideas respected and to show more confidence within political institutions. The study *Young Germans 2015* – in which more than 5,000 young people were asked about their living environments – shows that 64 percent of respondents aged between 14 and 34 have little or no political commitment because they feel they cannot change anything. The question of whether politics adequately represents the interests of the younger generation was answered in the negative by 77 percent of those surveyed (Datajockey 2015). The establishment of quotas for young people would give the positive impression that politics is open to the participation of young adults and that their participation is even desired. The vision of more participation and a connection of young people to the political arena are therefore connected with the demand for a quota of young people. Young deputies can serve in this context as role models and identification figures in order to increase interest in politics in their age group (Wallimann-Helmer 2015: 233).

³⁵ Original text: „Nichts schadet einem jungen Menschen mehr als das Gefühl, keinen Platz zu finden, nicht gebraucht zu werden und von der Gesellschaft ausgeschlossen zu sein“

3.6. Increasing the turnout of young people in elections

Voter turnout among young people is significantly lower than among older people. In the 2017 federal elections, the turnout of 18 to 35-year-olds was below 70 percent (18 to 20-year-olds: 69.9 percent; 21 to 24-year-olds: 67.0 percent; 25 to 29-year-olds: 68.6 percent; 30 to 34-year-olds: 72.0 percent), whereas it was significantly higher among the older age groups surveyed (with a peak value of 81 percent among 60 to 69-year-olds)¹⁶. In the 2013 elections, the difference between the turnout of 18-35 year olds and over-45 year olds was even greater. Looking at recent decades, with a general trend towards lower voter turnout, voter turnout among the younger generation has fallen more sharply than among the older generation. The absence at elections and the low political participation of young people have a significant influence on the quality and legitimacy of our democracy (IDEA 2013: 10, UNDP 2013: 3).

4. What counterarguments are there – and can they be refuted?

There are some reservations about the question of whether quotas for young people in democratically constituted states are a legitimate instrument. Since such quotas have so far only been tested in a few countries (see Table 1 below) and would represent an innovation at least for Germany, it is clear that the introduction of such an instrument needs to be thoroughly debated. At this point, we would like to mention some major doubts and concerns about a newcomer and youth quota. However, leaving these without comment would not be helpful in our search for newcomer or youth quotas. And in fact there are sound arguments for refuting or at least weakening the reservations.

4.1. The underlying idea of representation is quite wrong

The idea of representation called 'descriptive' or 'mirror-image' in literature considers it desirable that representatives of the people share some of the essential characteristics of the group they represent, such as shared experiences and/or physical identity (Pitkin 1967). Since everyone has a unique, non-reproducible background of experience, it is difficult if, for example, men try to represent the interests of women or representatives of the upper class try to represent the interests of the working class. The ideal of descriptive representation is based on the perception that the representative assembly reflects the socio-demographic divisions within society in exact proportions – it should be the entire citizenship of the microcosm (Birch 1971: 17; 1975: 56).

This idea of representation has been criticized. For example, should Muslims really understand their mission of representation as promoting the interests of Muslims above anything else; or should women put the interests of women and younger people the interests of

¹⁶ See Bundeswahlleiter (Ed.) (2018): Wahl zum 19. Deutschen Bundestag am 24.9. 2017. Issue 4, https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/dam/jcr/eod2b01f-32ff-40fo-ba9f-50b5f761bb22/btw17_heft4.pdf, 11.

young people above anything else? After all, Article 38 (1) of the Constitution reads: "[The deputies] are representatives of the whole people...".¹⁷

This first counterargument misjudges the fact that there is no criticism at all here when all parliamentarians try to exceed their group affiliations and make decisions oriented towards the common good. However, this presupposes a genuine exchange. In the history of parliamentarianism, completely homogeneous parliaments have rarely taken decisions of public interest. Imagine the Bundestag consisting of one hundred percent men. Of course it could be possible that this men's club has women's interests as strongly in mind as its own, but such an assumption would be rather naive.

The opportunity to express one's experiences and one's goals and interests is an essential aspect of political participation. Young people should therefore be allowed to bring in their own concerns instead of only being represented by older people.

The idea of descriptive representation should not be absolutized, but this idea – depending on the country in different contexts – has encouraged numerous previously politically abstinent or even openly oppressed groups in recent decades to venture into politics, which has benefited democracy as a whole.

4.2. There are no common interests of the young generation

Of course, young people have very different music or clothing tastes. But when this position paper argues about common 'interests', it does not mean taste. As mentioned above, young people have the above-mentioned group interest in future-oriented politics because of their long remaining life expectancy (the characteristic that distinguishes them from older members of parliament). This does not imply that there cannot be a single young parliamentarian who does not care about the future. The following comparison helps to understand: All women can give birth to children and thus as a group has a feature that distinguishes them from non-women. Here, too, there are women who do not care about having children. Nevertheless, women in general have an interest in maternity leave and family-friendly legal norms for returning to work afterwards. Similarly, the group characteristic of 'high remaining life expectancy' generally means that people are particularly interested in forward-looking, long-term policies.

It should also be undeniable that life stages are associated with one's own experiences¹⁸. From these experiences age-related interests of the 18 to 35-year-olds arise, which differ from the concerns of the older generation. It is clear, for example, that issues relating to education, access to the labour market and the housing crisis are of particular concern to the younger generation, whereas these are no longer the main concerns of the older generation. In contrast, older people have a common interest in receiving high pensions. Even if

¹⁷ Original text: „[Die Abgeordneten] sind Vertreter des ganzen Volkes...“.

¹⁸ Bidanure (2014: 42) rightly points out that the way in which these experiences are experienced can vary greatly culturally.

this interest is more pronounced with some old people than with others, it is nevertheless plausible that this demand is raised by old person federations in the interest of their entire target group. To state these obvious group interests does not mean to declare the members of a generation thereby as a homogeneous group.

4.3. Young people's policies are not future-orientated

The participation of young people in political decisions does not guarantee that future issues will be dealt with more intensively. Some young MEPs are also likely to be tempted to think short-sightedly, but, unlike older generations of MEPs, they will still have to live with the consequences of today's (wrong) decisions in 50 or more years' time. It is therefore not surprising that young people today are moved by global issues of the future and that issues such as environmental pollution, climate change and sustainable economic management meet with the younger generation's approval (Sloam 2007: 553). The 2010 Shell Youth Study, for example, found that 76 percent of respondents between the ages of 12 and 25 see climate change as a major or even very major problem and consider it urgent to tackle it (Albert et al. 2010). At demonstrations (such as "fridays for future"), it is predominantly younger people who take to the streets for climate protection. And in the USA, it was young people who demonstrated most persistently for stricter wafer control laws after recent school massacres.

4.4. Young people lack experience

Another counterargument is that young people lack experience. They are therefore not authorised to vote in political decisions because of their age. In view of the many current problems, it can be argued that experience and age do not seem to guarantee successful politics. To many challenges and problems, conflicts and imbalances the past politics of the old did not find reasonable and lasting answers. Short-term and ad hoc decisions create new conflicts and difficulties. It cannot be denied that experience accumulates over the years, but if the framework conditions change fundamentally (as in the case of digitisation or the transition to a new geological epoch from the Holocene to the Anthropocene) then the young can sometimes have an advantage. It is not a question of playing one kind of experience off against the other. The fresh ideas, commitment and visions of the younger generation must be combined with the wealth of experience that the older generation has built up in their lifetimes.

4.5. Other minorities must be supported by quota as well

If, firstly, one accepts the argument that a parliament should more or less reflect society as a whole and, secondly, that quotas are an efficient means of achieving this goal, then the question arises: quotas for which groups? After all, there are, in principle, countless groups in society that can be candidates for descriptive representation (Tozer 2018: 26): redheads, Jews, small people, women, left-handed people, cyclists, the disabled, young people, etc. (...). Fortunately, there are principles that can meaningfully determine which groups should

be represented, because it is immediately obvious that there is a good reason for the descriptive representation of some of these groups, such as women, while this does not apply to other groups, e.g. redheads¹⁹. For Tozer (2018), two principles are crucial: "The group must have meaningful, not merely marginal group interests, and these interests must be politically achievable. It is not the purpose of this position paper to discuss these two criteria with other groups that are seriously eligible for quotas (such as women and people with disabilities). It is sufficient to say at this point that young people have a group interest in the sense defined above both because of their remaining life expectancy and because it is possible for politics to satisfy this interest, i.e. to make sustainable decisions. Many other groups would also benefit from this.

5. Newcomer quotas in German parties

The political parties in Germany, as in other countries, play an important role in shaping the basic democratic order. Since party members are the 'eyes and ears' towards society as a whole, the increasing ageing of the parties is a problem (Kölln/Polk 2017; Bruter/Harrison 2009; Scarrow/Gezgor 2010). The general decline in party memberships since the 1970s in Germany affects the younger cohorts more strongly – not because they have resigned more often, but because they are less likely to join parties at all. Parties should not be ignored by the younger ones, because they continue to have a significant influence on political events by formulating concrete political goals and integrating the various political views into the decisions of state bodies. In addition to the task of recruiting political personnel, they are also responsible for gathering and expressing social interests and concerns (Merten 2007: 80). Parties enable the political participation of individuals and thus create a link between society and the political system (Korte 2009: 20). Organized participation in political parties is a special form of political participation because it can directly influence political decisions (Wiesendahl 2013: 93). The participation function of parties refers to the idea that representative democracy is expressed through collaboration in parties (Alemann 2010: 216-221). The integrational function of parties is also of particular importance:

"It should ensure that in a pluralistic society the different interests and ways of life are taken into account, interlinked and taken up by integration into political structures and processes" (Godewerth-Pollmann 2007: 133, translated by SRzG)²⁰.

There is a real danger that the parties will lose their integrational function with regard to different age groups. Bettina Munimus (2012) addresses this current issue with the following question in her dissertation: How will the CDU and SPD change in personnel,

¹⁹ See also Trantidis (2016); Young (1990). Often, however, no attempt is made to develop criteria at all, but the above argument is used to generally qualify quotas as unusable (Rehfeld 2009).

²⁰ Original text: „Sie soll sicherstellen, dass in einer pluralistischen Gesellschaft die unterschiedlichen Interessen und Lebensweisen Berücksichtigung finden, miteinander verknüpft werden und durch die Einbindung in die politischen Strukturen und Prozesse aufgenommen werden“.

institutional and organisational terms when the majority of their members are retired?²¹ The German Party Member Survey 2009 showed that 43 percent of the approximately three thousand respondents agree with a regulation on the internal balance between young and old²². By comparison, only 35 percent rated the quota in favour of women as meaningful (Laux 2011: 170). However, no political party has yet implemented a newcomer quota for intergenerational alignment in the political process as we propose²³. Recruiting young politicians in Germany is solely the parties' task (Leif 2010: 59, translated by SRzG). Full-time professional positions would almost exclusively be assigned to party members who had been active in the party for several years and had already held mandates at regional and municipal level. Following Dietrich Herzog's analysis of the course of political careers, Andreas Gruber (2009) was able to empirically prove the slow, hard road to the top with his work. The so-called 'Ochsentour', i.e. the decades of passing through various party levels, starting at the very bottom, is still the defining pattern of political ascent in Germany. So far there have only been tentative attempts to dissolve this.

5.1. 'Neuenquote' among the Greens

The Greens are relying on the so-called 'Neuenquote' (Reiser 2014: 59) for their policy for junior staff. Accordingly, candidates of state elections in Berlin (§22 of the statutes of the Green State Association of Berlin) and Lower Saxony (§14 [3] of the statutes of the Green State Association of Lower Saxony) who have not previously been represented in a parliament nor held a political office are to be placed on the party's state list. In concrete terms, this means that at least every third position on the list is filled with a candidate who has never been in a parliament and has not yet held a political office. This is intended to ensure that a balance is held between the long-serving members of parliament in the party and the newcomers by giving them a concrete chance to move into Landtag. It should be noted that the 'Neuenquote' does not apply exclusively to young people under 35, but includes all age groups.

5.2. Right to propose candidates for election in the Left Party

Within the party structures at state level, the youth association Linksjugend [solid] has a right of proposal in a total of four federal states²⁴. It stipulates that the respective state member assemblies of the youth organisations must nominate two candidates from their

²¹ Her central result is that elected representatives and functionaries increasingly anticipate the expectations and issues of the majority of older members, not least in order to retain the votes of the older members during votes.

²² More detailed information on the study can be found under Klein/Spier 2013.

²³ On the question of how the parties should organise themselves internally in order to be regarded as "generationally just parties", see SRzG's "11-point plan", <https://generationengerechtigkeit.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PP-Generationengerechte-Parteien.pdf>

²⁴ This concerns Brandenburg, Bremen, Saxony and Thuringia.

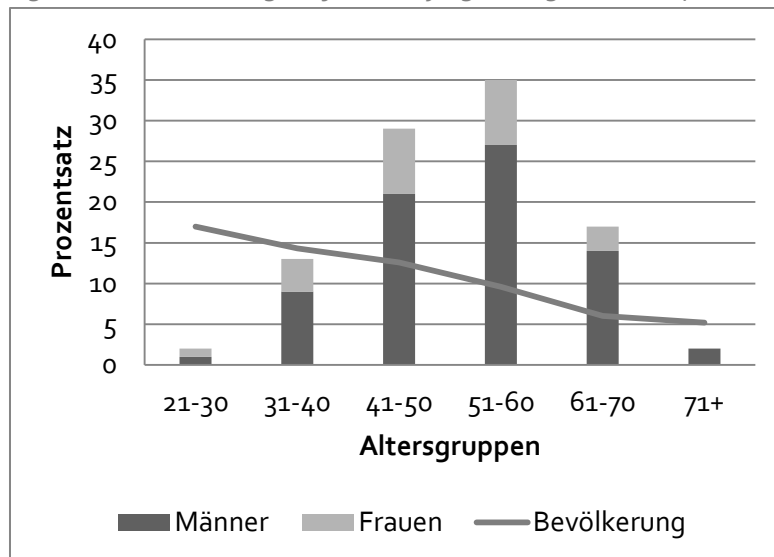
own ranks for the list of nominees for the respective state elections²⁵. The two proposed candidates have the same status as those persons who were nominated by the district associations as proposed candidates for the state elections, with the difference that the district associations are allowed to nominate one proposal each according to their number, but the youth association is granted the right to nominate two candidates at the same time.

6. International examples

The lack of representation of younger people in parliaments is not a purely German problem. Only 2.2 percent of the members of all parliaments in the world are younger than 30; only 14.2 percent of all parliamentarians worldwide are younger than 40 (IPU 2018, 3). About 30 percent of all unicameral parliaments and lower houses of bicameral parliaments in the world have no deputies under 30; about 3 percent have no deputies under 40. Of the upper houses of bicameral parliaments, 67 percent have no deputies under 30 and 20 percent have no deputies under 40.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of parliamentarians and the proportion of the population for six age groups, divided by gender (Krook/Nugent 2018: 7). Worldwide, as in Germany, younger (and very old) people are underrepresented in parliaments compared to their share of the population, while those over 40 to under 70 years of age accumulate most of the power in their hands. Male parliamentarians continue to outnumber their female counterparts in every age group, but gender imbalance is lower among younger parliamentarians.

Figure 2: Global averages of MEPs by age and gender compared to total population (age only)



Source: Krook/Nugent 2018: 63.

²⁵ For example in Brandenburg, see: http://www.dielinke-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/Vertreterversammlungen/Landesliste_2014/Dokumente/14-01-21_VV_Entwurf_Wahl-_und_Geschaeftsordnung_Landesliste.pdf (20.08.2015).

The idea of newcomer quotas has gained momentum in recent years. In 2018, the IPU was the first international organisation to introduce clauses in its statutes to promote the descriptive representation of young people. The IPU statutes and rules now encourage the 178 member parliaments of the organisation to include at least one young parliamentary man or woman in their official delegation (IPU 2018, 6) and grant extra speaking time to the parliamentary delegations that do so. The IPU also supports the global 'Nottooyoungtorun' campaign, which aims to adjust the eligibility age to the voting age²⁶. Currently, 73 percent of all countries have a higher passive voting age than an active one. In a comparative study, Krook and Nugent (2018: 63) have shown a correlation between the existence of an increased eligibility age and the proportion of under-45s in parliament. This statistically significant, independent effect makes an average difference of more than five percent in the proportion of under-45s at an age below 25 instead of 18. This means that a low age of eligibility usually slightly increases the proportion of young MPs. The abolition of a higher eligibility age can therefore be an effective instrument for rejuvenating Parliament. In Germany, however, the eligibility age for parliamentarians is already relatively low, so that this elevating screw should no longer be tightened in Germany. This is where newcomer quotas come in.

Some countries have in fact already adopted newcomer quotas. Three possibilities can be distinguished (see column "Type of quota" in Table 1): First, 'reserved seats' guarantee that the younger generation will be represented in parliament, but if the number of seats is converted to the total number of MPs, the ratio is very low²⁷. Secondly, quotas can be prescribed by law for all parties (legal quotas) or, thirdly, applied by individual parties (party quotas). The latter tend to have the highest percentages of quotas, but there is no guarantee that young people will actually enter parliament because it is not certain whether the party applying the quotas will be elected at all.

After all, in six EU countries (Sweden, Croatia, Hungary, Cyprus, Lithuania and Romania) at least one party has a newcomer quota. In Sweden, for example, the Swedish Social Democratic Party has introduced such a regulation²⁸. The process of introduction was facilitated by the fact that this party had already introduced a women's quota which the young party members could copy²⁹. In other countries (Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya), quotas for young people were introduced as part of constitutional reforms aimed at reconciling societies after (civil) wars. In Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, quotas for young people were added in the

²⁶ <http://www.nottooyoungtorun.org/>

²⁷ All "reserved seats" clauses have an embedded gender quota, i.e. at least one of the seats is reserved for a woman. In Rwanda and Kenya even parity is mandatory.

²⁸ In Sweden, the age structure within the parties there is more balanced than in Germany. Averaged over all Swedish parties are over 14% of the members under 26.

²⁹ The IPU (2018: 28 f.) examines the interactions between women's and young talent quotas and recommends interlinking the two quotas, i.e. embedding one quota in the other. If they exist side by side, the undesirable side effect can be that young men or older women are disadvantaged compared to the then doubly favoured group of young women.

aftermath of the Arab Spring. Often, civil society actors needed specific opportunity windows to accomplish their goals.

Table 1 shows that the details vary greatly for all quota types, while Table 2 describes a small selection of case studies in greater detail.

The examples show that newcomer quotas in parliaments and parties are by no means unrealistic. In conclusion, it can be said that this is an idea whose time for implementation has come for Germany as well.

Table 1: Overview of the junior quota regulations in individual countries

Country	Type of quota	Age group	Amount of quota %	% under the age of 30	% under the age of 40	Gender quota
Rwanda	reserved seats	under 35	7,7	1,3	22,5	embedded
Morocco	reserved seats	under 40	7,6	1,6	14,7	embedded
Kenya Lower House	reserved seats	under 35	3,4	no data	no data	
Kenya Upper House	reserved seats	under 35	2,9	3,0	26,9	embedded
Uganda	reserved seats	under 30	1,3	1,1	22,9	embedded
Philippines	official	unknown	50	1,7	15,8	embedded
Tunisia	official	under 35	25	6,5	22,6	mixed
Gabon	official	under 40	20	0,0	8,6	separate
Kyrgyzstan	official	under 36	15	4,2	35,0	-
Egypt	official	under 35	diverse	1,0	11,8	separate
Nicaragua	political party	unknown	40, ³⁰ 15	1,1	14,1	separate
Romania	political party	unknown	30	6,4	35,3	mixed
Mexico	political party	under 30	30, 20	7,6	35,7	separate
Montenegro	political party	under 30	30, 20	9,9	30,9	separate
Vietnam	political party	under 40	26,5	1,8	12,3	separate
El Salvador	political party	under 31	25	2,4	14,3	separate
Sweden	political party	under 35	25	12,3	34,1	separate
Mozambique	political party	under 35	20	0,0	17,2	separate
Cyprus	political party	under 45, 35	20	1,8	12,5	separate
Lithuania	political party	under 35	unknown	2,8	19,2	separate
Hungary	political party	unknown	20	2,0	29,4	separate
Senegal	political party	unknown	20	0,0	11,0	separate
Angola	political party	unknown	15	0,6	11,1	separate
Turkey	political party	unknown	10	0,2	8,8	separate
Croatia	political party	unknown	unknown	2,7	21,9	separate
Ukraine	Party	unknown	unknown	5,0	41,2	separate

Source: IPU 2018: 26.³¹

³⁰40 percent of the seats in Nicaragua must be allocated to women and newcomers.

Table 2: Selection of junior quota systems in individual countries

Country	population	Participation of young people	Electoral law
Kenya	43 millions	Article 98(c) of the 2010 Constitution states that a total of 2 seats – one for a woman and one for a man – shall be awarded in the upper house between the ages of 18 and 35.	18 years (active and passive)
Nicaragua	6 millions	The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) party adopted a quota of 15 percent in its party constitution in 2002. It guarantees the next generation of politicians (up to the age of 29) participation in all party organs and in the candidatorship of national elections.	16 years (active) 21 years (passive)
Peru	31 millions	The two laws 28869 and 29470 prescribe a mandatory quota for young people in regional and local elections (but not at national level). The rate is 20 per cent for people aged between 25 and 29 in party lists.	18 years (active) 25 years (passive)
Rwanda	11,8 millions	Article 76(3) of the 2003 Constitution grants a total of 2 Lower House seats to persons under the age of 35. The deputies are appointed by the National Youth Council.	18 years (active and passive)
Tunisia	10,9 millions	A regulation in the list of parties in the run-up to national elections stipulates that at least one person under the age of 35 must be one of the top four candidates.	18 years (active) 23 years (passive)
Uganda	38 millions	In the national parliament, a total of 5 seats are allocated to the age group between 18 and 30 years. At least one of these seats will be awarded to a woman.	18 years (active and passive)

Source: own compilation based on IPU 2018, IDEA 2013 and UNDP 2013

³¹ No claim to completeness. The IPU points out that, especially with party quotas, it is difficult or even impossible to record all parties in the world. In some cases, quotas do not exist for national elections, but for subnational ones, which is not included in Table 1.

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The Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (SRzG): is an advocacy think tank at the interface between science and politics and is regarded as "the best-known extra-parliamentary think tank in matters of intergenerational justice" (Wirtschaftswoche): It was founded in 1997 by a non-party alliance of five young people between the ages of 18 and 27, is headed by one of the youngest foundation boards in Germany and pursues the goal of sharpening knowledge and awareness of generational justice and sustainability in politics, business and society through practical research and consulting. The foundation is financially independent and is not close to any political party.

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