

Regaining Europe
The role of youth work in supporting European Cohesion

**The current developments in Europe
with it implications in the youth field**

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Structure of this short* introduction

- Context, past & present
- Illness & remedy?
- Radical choices
- What about youth and youth work?

* Count the slides, only 18

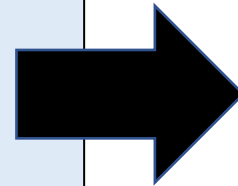


Why this issue?

A classical sociological hit parade

SOCIETY

- Globalisation
- Individualism & egoism
- The risk society
- Ideological poverty, losing values,
- Uncertainties everywhere
- Hedonism & consumism
- Failing systems & governments
- Vanishing solidarity & increasing exclusion
- Fragmentation instead of cohesion
- Into fascism & stupid nationalism



YOUNG PEOPLE

- Indifferent ... extremism
- Lazy ... careerism
- Reckless ... to obedient
- Bad sperm
- To much drugs & sex
- Radical ... to conservative
- Etc.

Why this issue? Young people & Europe

The pessimistic approach

- Taking the benefits (open borders, easy travelling, Erasmus, the EURO...) for granted – its normal
- What's in it for us?
- Overwhelming negative (fake) news on immigration, open borders, cheating with support, unfair solidarity
- Vanishing sovereignty, eating the national pride and identity

So: between dislike and indifference, no benefits only for the happy few



The optimistic approach

- Never before so much international mobility by young people
- A natural global communication, virtual and physical
- Eruption of engagement (climate)
- A lot of initiatives in local surroundings
- Many opportunities and lots of support to go international
- No learning without an international dimension

So: international is natural & necessary, part of being young

Context: past & present

Development of a system – 3 decisive phases

Makeability of society

... 18th century:
Enlightenment
Science, empirics
Optimism: to master
nature & reality
Belief in constructing,
building a society,
feasibility

State of law, democracy

... 19th century
Nation states,
Humble democracy,
Developing & broadening
citizenship (right to vote)
Separation of powers,
State of law
Increasing rights and
equality for all people
Invention of society

Welfare state

After WW II
Combination of free
marked & (strong)
correction
organized solidarity
Protection against
calamities,
life long insurance,
equalizing chances

Context: past & present

There is something rotten in the state of ...

Makeability of society ?

*Hubris: the boundaries of science & planning,
Inability, failures, modesty,
pessimism
Club of Rome, poverty,
dying continents,
climate changes,
warming up,
pollution, impotence to solve
severe crises...*

State of law, democracy ?

*Eroding of democratic values,
boundaries of delegation
democracy,
no sense of ownership,
increasing cynicism, disbelief
in dialogue,
emerging anti-politics,
uprising ultra-right,
decreasing tolerance,
hardening of the discourse*

Welfare state ?

*Unbearable to finance,
cold bureaucracy,
no more commitment
Abuses all over, buccaneers
Suspicion towards immigrants
(profiteers)
Shift of values and
explanation: the individual
guilt model
...*

Solutions? Of course...

The nineties: the “active” welfare state as a remedy

- Reinventing, revitalization of the welfare state
- U. Beck & A. Giddens
- An answer & counterattack against ultra-liberalism (Thatcherism) and reconquest of the uncorrected free market ideology
- Activating: more involvement of citizens
- Regaining, rebuilding a sense of co-ownership & commitment

But... the economic dictatorship & prioritising utility for the market

- One sided emphasis on economic – market driven – activation: jobs, jobs & employability
- Total denial of social, cultural, political, ethical activating (creating active citizenship, co-ownership, involvement...)
- Even – especially – by social political families (socialists, Christian-democrats...)
- Effects: increasing poverty, broadening the gap between richness & poverty, more cynicism and dislike of solidarity
- More ultra liberalism... sneak poison, increasing raw capitalism

What now?

Kleiner Mann, was nun? (Hans Fallada)

Recapture / reconquest of values

Europe as an ideological project

Young people & youth work as a vanguard

Radical choices! Yes

Admitting the mistakes – rephrasing the active welfare state

- Yes, activation... but explicitly on social, cultural, political and ethical dimensions (beyond economics)
- Only by an active democratic approach (co-ownership of citizens)
- Adding elements of direct democracy in the framework of the delegation democracy (hybrid, collaborating, deliberating...)
- Creating common - mutual projects with different actors
- Structural and sustainable, not only by democratic “projects” or “events”

Radical choices? Yes (2)

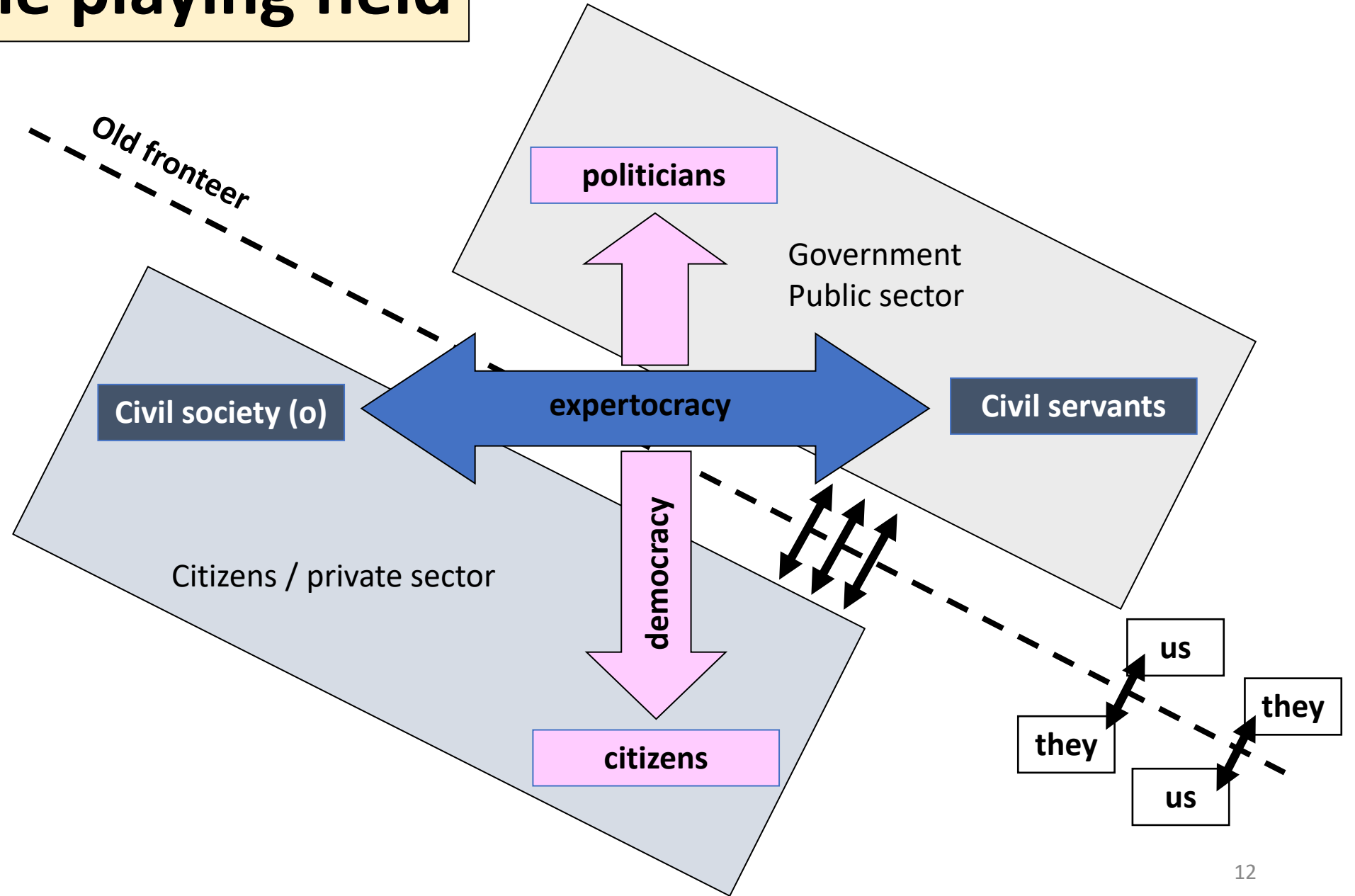
Admitting the mistakes – rephrasing the active welfare state

- A responsibility of governments: creating a structure and culture of debate, interaction and co-ownership in all environments
- Broadening the system of “cold” solidarity (social security...) with warm solidarity: volunteering, philanthropy... without weakening the solidarity system (more achievements, less bureaucracy)
- Giving “positive discrimination” new chances, but only as results of public debate; no routine, this creates antagonism against solidarity
- (pro)active facilitation, support and guidance for CSO’s based on the hypotheses of “promising” – not on false causal evidence

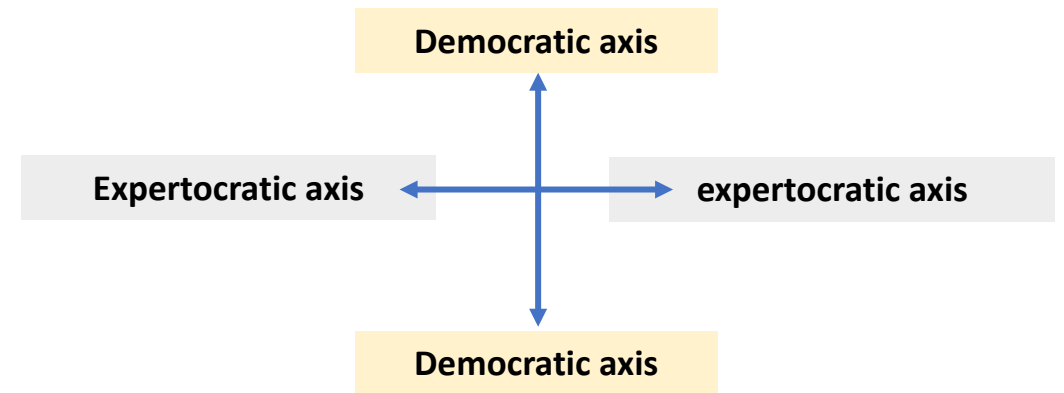
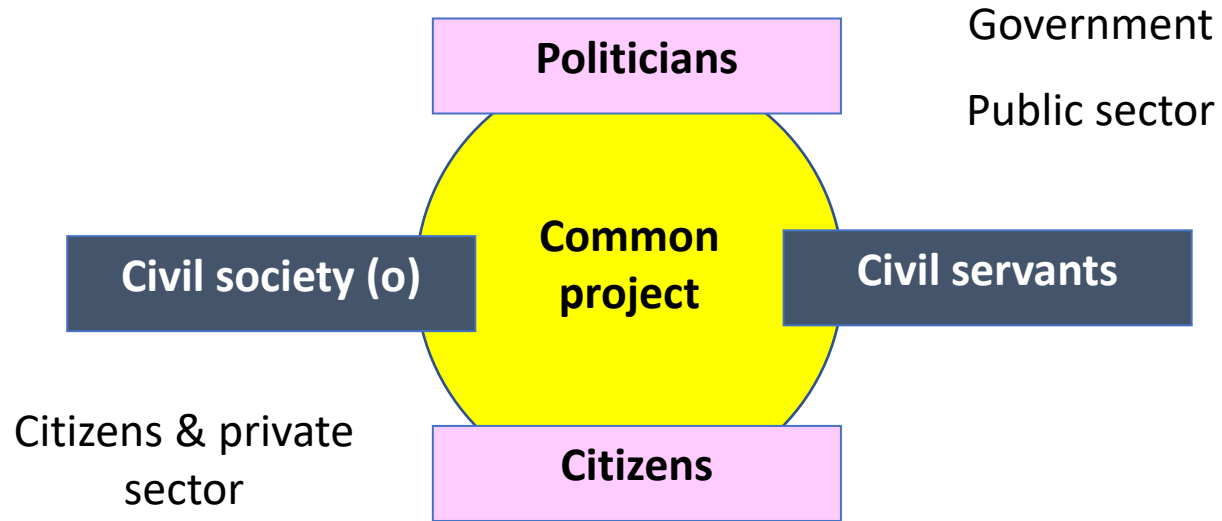
Choices become policy by

1. Creating and facilitate active citizens / civil society organisations
2. Modest, serving & inviting, tantalizing, stimulating governments
3. Steering by networks – admitting interdependency
4. Interactive, active democratic governmental approach
5. Redefine participation: form “taking” towards “having” part

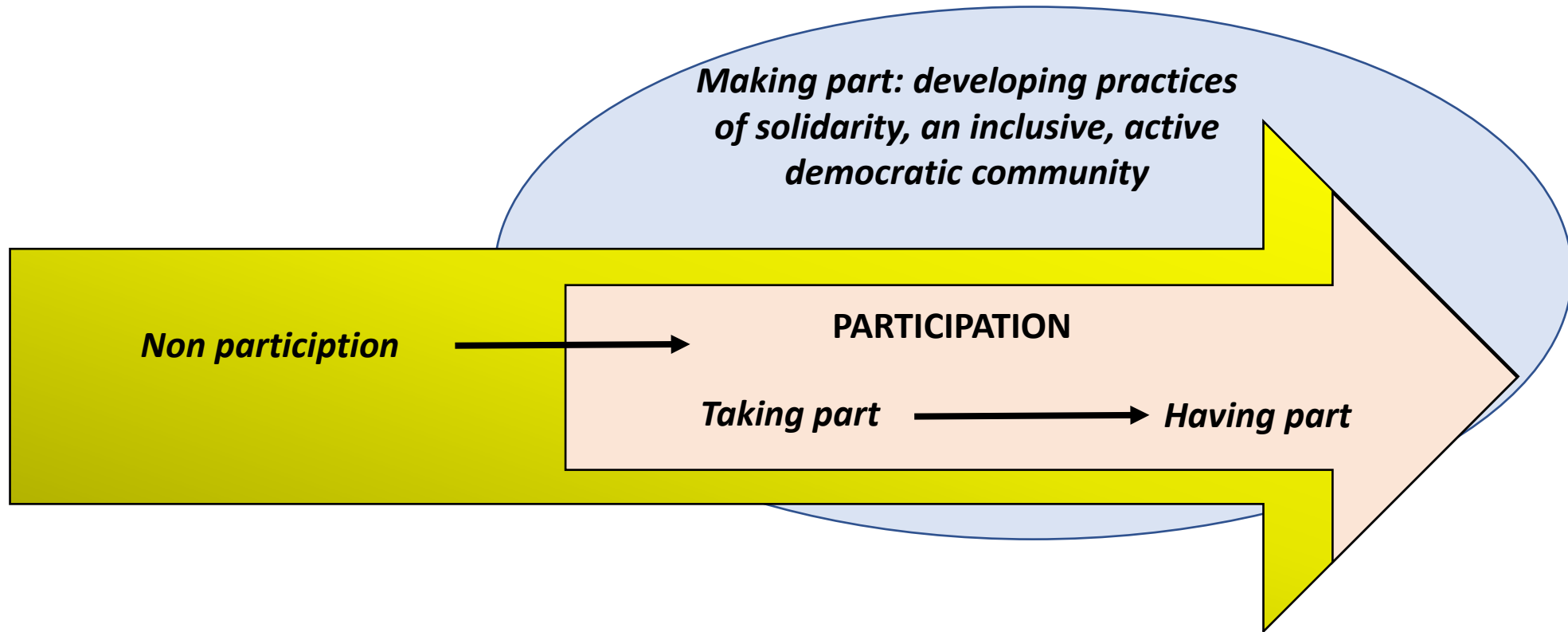
Redefine the playing field



Redefine the playing field

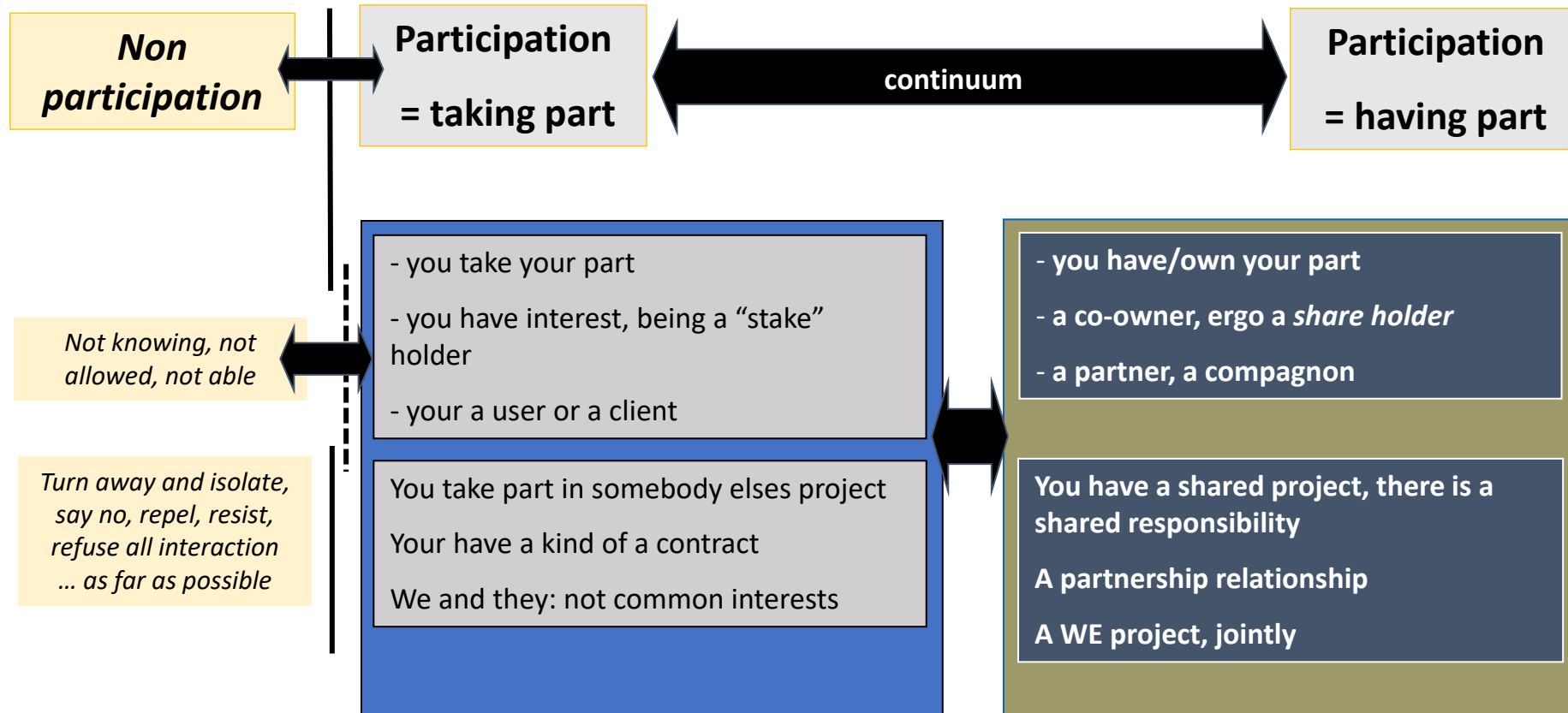


Redefine participation



CONTINUUM OF PARTICIPATION on the road for STRUCTURAL & INCLUSIVE SOLIDARITY

Redefine participation



MAKING PART on the road for solidarity & inclusion

And youth ??

No radical choices without severe impact & consequences on all educational systems: schools, youth care, juvenile justice, youth work...

Treating children & young people as full-fledged co-owner of all systems

An other view/approach needed:

- **Reducing age limits on civil law aspects** (voting, sex...) to be negotiated with young people
- **Increase age limit on criminal justice** aspects to 23 y because the human brain grows until that age (drift control)

A fundamental change in school education:

- Less emphasis on employability and economical utility
- More emphasis on social, cultural, political and ethical discussion & activation

And youth work ??

Youth work

- A vanguard & explorer of a radical educational (pedagogical) concept (sometimes already doing so)
- Approach of youth work as an ideological (concept of coherent values, much more than a methodology...)
- A specific, distinguished vision on creating an active democratic environment for children & young people

And youth work? Towards an ideological concept

Strong ideological identity of youth work

- Offering plenty of time, opportunities... for debate, discussion, doubts
- An authoritarian system cannot reproduce democracy and solidarity
- An emancipatory approach: guiding towards greater autonomy
- Youth workers are mainly young themselves: a atmosphere of being young together. *Also for the vast majority of youth workers??*
- Playful, offensive and optimistic: creating their own leisure time
- Guidance working from self-evident solidarity. The political (ideological) approach is not a top down dictate but grows bottom up
- Explicit dealing with inequality, exclusion, deprivation: intern and in de nearby societies/environment

**Thanks for listening,
curious about your
reactions**