Freie Universität Berlin
Otto-Suhr-Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Children's Participation Rights in the European Union

The Prospect of Meaningful Policy through Images of Children

Masterarbeit

vorgelegt von: Martha Schillmöller
M.A. Politikwissenschaft – Affaires Internationales/Affaires Européennes

Erstgutachter: Dr. Andreas Hofmann
Zweitgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Miriam Hartlapp

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List of Abbreviations

CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
EP	European Parliament
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EU	European Union
EYCS	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council
UN	United Nations

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Abstract

Children's participation rights are among the most contentious rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as they touch upon deeply rooted societal dynamics on whether children are and should be recognised as either social objects or subjects of rights. Parallelly, in the European Union (EU), the realisation of child participation hinges upon the European Commission's limited mandate to achieve meaningful and binding child participation provisions. In this context, this thesis focuses on Member States as underestimated actors for the prospect of meaningful EU child participation policy and on how they recognise and perceive children. This thesis argues that establishing *how* children are perceived in three Presidencies of the Council of the EU (Romania, Germany and Finland) provides a narrow-normative but necessary perspective on the prospect of meaningful EU child participation policy. More specifically, the three-dimensional concept of recognition by Axel Honneth (1995) and the figurative tool of images of children serve to establish a framework-matrix to assess child images in speeches and documents. This thesis finds that the challenge lies less in finding agreement across Member States than in realising meaningful child participation policy that understands children as subjects.

Keywords:
Children's rights; Child participation; Recognition; EU Policy; Presidency of the Council of the European Union

"*We dream of a future in which the gap between legislation and reality concerning children's participation doesn't exist […]".*

Tudor Panait, Romanian Junior Ambassador to the EU,
April 2, 2019,
12th European Forum on the Rights of the Child

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance and Context

The question of children's rights and position in national as well as international society appears particularly relevant in a time when children around the world are mobilising to raise awareness over climate change. Especially since children's participation rights are among the most "controversial" rights enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Tisdall 2016:75). The sensitivity of the issue of child participation stems not only from the question of whether and how children should participate in society. The core academic and political debate goes even deeper, touching upon whether children are and should be recognised as either social objects or subjects of rights (Hartung 2017:17; Kjørholt 2013:245; Beier 2019:216).

In the child rights literature, the European Union (EU) presents potential for asserting itself as a "children's rights actor" (Stalford and Iusmen 2015:13). This is illustrated by the European Commission (hereinafter "Commission") *EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child*, established in consultation with 10.000 children (European Commission 2021b:3–4). Also, the resolutions by the European Parliament (EP) for the 30th anniversary of the CRC (European Parliament 2019) and the publication of the EU Child Rights Strategy (European Parliament 2021) demonstrate this trend. But despite these initiatives, child participation is criticised, in EU reports and academia alike, for lacking meaningfulness both in the Commission's interpretations (Iusmen 2018) and in how it remains tokenistic at the EU and the national level (Day et al. 2015; Janta et al. 2021). Such criticism points in particular to the insufficient usage of EU soft law instruments addressing children's rights at the national level (Frazer and Marlier 2017; Hartlapp and Hofmann 2021:12; Iusmen 2015:337) and to the lack of measures promoting meaningful child participation in practice (Iusmen 2018:107; Tisdall 2016).

When stating that despite existing EU child rights policy, meaningful child participation remains more promise than reality, scholars criticise the Commission for confusing Member States with "conflicting policy frames" (Iusmen 2015:348), lack of "expertise" (Iusmen 2018:98), and failure to defend children as "equal citizens" (Stalford and Iusmen 2015:315). However, blaming solely the Commission seeks the problem in the wrong place.

Instead, both at the EU and the national level, Member States are hidden protagonists of child rights policy as many areas relevant for children's participation fall under Member States' competence to legislate (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Council of Europe, and Registry of the European Court of Human Rights 2015:22; Janta et al. 2021:118). Moreover, child participation provisions are located largely in the realm of EU soft law, characterised by non-legally-binding provisions (Hartlapp and Hofmann 2021:1; Iusmen 2015:337) relying on individual Member States for application.

Thus, although the Commission is in charge of policy, it cannot realise more meaningful child participation policy on its own because it:

(i) lacks the means to achieve change at Member-State-level (Janta et al. 2021:118; Stalford and Iusmen 2015:319);

(ii) is constrained by its fear of "overstepping" its competence vis-à-vis the Member States (Iusmen 2018:106; 115).[1]

With the new Child Rights Strategy, the Commission embarked on riskier rights-based terrain. But - and this is key - non-binding instruments such as said strategy, as promising as they may seem, are not enough to achieve substantial change as long as Member States are not on the same page.

1.2 Research Interest and Question(s)

Therefore, instead of Commission-initiated policy, this thesis focuses on Member States – a perspective that has received less attention in the EU child rights literature.

[1] Meaningful child participation policy must be implementable and transport a meaningful understanding of children (section 2.3). The CRC's 19th General Comment understands "policies" regarding children's rights as "all public policies, strategies, regulations, guidelines and statements, including their goals, objectives, indicators and targeted results, that affect the rights of the child, or could do so" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2016:3). Accordingly, policy is understood as direction and guideline, informing, extending or applying legislation.

This thesis will assess images of children put forward during Presidencies of the Council of the EU (hereinafter "Presidencies"), where countries represent EU Member States but also national actors (Vaznonytė 2020:513–14). As will be discussed, images of children are useful indicators of children's societal recognition. Accordingly, children's participation rights will be approached through the concept of recognition, imagined by Axel Honneth (1995) and adapted for children's participation by Nigel Thomas (2012).

Thus, the research questions are formulated as follows:

What do images of children reveal regarding the prospect of a meaningful EU policy on child participation?

1.1 What images of children do EU Member States put forward via their Presidencies of the Council of the EU?

1.2 Are these images compatible, authentic and meaningful?

This analysis follows recommendations that new policy and extending EU competences are not necessarily the solution, as long as cultural conditions (Day et al. 2015:151) and processual parameters (Stalford and Schuurman 2011:399), in which meaningful policy can become a reality, are missing. The goal, however, is not proving that child images representing cultural norms, values, and attitudes (Smith 2012:34; Verhellen 2015:44) can explain (non-)implementation of concrete policy or EU (soft-)law instruments, or the establishment of new provisions. Instead, focusing on child images evaluates the prospect of meaningful participation policy on a more abstract level. Concretely, this thesis will map child images presented in government-speech acts in three rotating Presidencies and assess them against:

(i) the child images of the other countries (compatibility);
(ii) the ideal image for meaningful child participation (meaningfulness, presented below);
(iii) the national child approach(es) (authenticity).

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis addresses the research question(s) with a qualitative research design, led by the normative concept of recognition and combined with descriptive-comparative elements embedded in a "collective case study" (Stake 1994:237) (see section 6.1). The first part defines

core notions and introduces the concept of recognition. After a literature review focusing on children's participation rights and images, the recognition concept will be made empirically applicable: Concretely, child images, from the literature, will be integrated as categories into a matrix, built on the concept of recognition and the understanding of children as objects/subjects. In the empirical part, Romania, Germany and Finland are selected as illustrating the EU's diversity and the choice of Presidency-settings is explained. At Presidency-level, a qualitative content analysis of Presidency speeches will identify child images and establish the most suitable matrix-sphere based on the recognition-mode they reflect. Parallelly, secondary literature will establish which matrix-sphere best captures the national child approach(es), as benchmark for Presidency child images. The final discussion will perform a vertical and horizontal assessment of Presidency child images, across political levels, countries and against the ideal child image (defined in section 2.2) to provide an indication for the prospect of meaningful EU child participation policy.

2. Definitions

This chapter defines the concepts of "Children" (2.1), "The Child as Subject" (2.2) and "Meaningful Child Participation (Policy)" (2.3).

2.1 Children

Following the first Article of the CRC, this thesis defines children as "every human being below the age of eighteen years" (United Nations 1989:1). This includes the group of "10 to 15 until 18 years old" whom, as Desmet (2012:10–11) pinpointed, the EU as well as other European and international institutions define sometimes as children and sometimes as youth. Though also targeting this in-between age group, the present thesis employs the term "children" (and alternatively "young people"). Speaking of "youth" could be understood as including young people until the age of 30 who have voting rights. The author is aware that older children might not feel adequately addressed by the term "children" and this should not be a plea for doing so. Rather, choosing this terminology sets the focus on participation in the child policy field, where, as a recent Commission-study on child participation found (Janta et al. 2021:38; 87), it is less evident than for youth and older children.

2.2 The Child as Subject: The Ideal Image for Child Participation

The literature designates the image of the child as subject as ideal to achieve for a society where child participation is a reality (Beier 2019; Daly 2020; Kjørholt 2002; Smith 2012). From a small-scale analysis of speeches from Junior Ambassadors in the below-analysed Presidencies[2], three conditions for the fulfilment of children's subject-status were identified, matching the findings from the above-mentioned Commission-study on child participation (Janta et al. 2021:4; 69–70):

(i) the granting of active membership (citizenship) in the community;
(ii) the assumption of competence;
(iii) valuation instead of symbolism and tokenism.

The child as subject is an ideal rather than a real type and will thus be approximated through different subtypes (see section 6.3).

Moreover, the concept of *being a subject* carries the competing connotation of *being subject to someone or something*, subjecting the child as object to societal progress (Lister 2003:433–34) or societal exclusion (Bessant 2020:234–35). This false friend inhibits meaningful child participation as it equalises the image of the child as (passive) "consumer" (Kjørholt 2013:248) with that of "competent" citizen (Smith 2012:34). Thus, the following sections will aim to distinguish object- and subject-driven approaches to child participation.

2.3 Defining Meaningful Child Participation (Policy)

This thesis follows the observation that "participation can happen in different spheres of live and action (for instance, the family, public sphere) and relate to personal, private, social, economic or political ends" by Liebel and Saadi (2012:164). Child participation is understood as a social phenomenon, "located on a continuum between informal and formal, and between every day and political participation" (Walther et al. 2020:3).

In contrast to active participation forms, children's participation in culture and youth work are sometimes framed as "passive take-up activities" (Percy-Smith 2018:166). In EU policy,

[2] See Appendix D for details on the analysis.

however, these forms fall under the definition of child participation (European Commission 2013:9).

The concept of recognition, frequently mentioned as underlying rationale for children's participation (Bessant 2020; Daly 2020; Fitzgerald et al. 2009; Kiilakoski et al. 2020), reduces the forms and purposes of participation to their core: children's societal role (Thomas 2012:463) as subject or object.

This thesis, therefore, defines meaningful child participation as a mode of recognition that understands children as full and active subjects, enabling the child to take part in all forms of social interaction and political processes across societal spheres.

Accordingly, to be meaningful, child participation policy must (i) reflect an understanding of children as full and active subjects; and (ii) bridge the implementation gap between legislation and reality (European Parliament 2021:38–39).

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter introduces the concept of recognition (3.1) and its application to child participation (rights) (3.2).

The thesis' theoretical framework focuses on the concept of recognition. It has been conceptualised by different philosophers, including Honneth (1995), Taylor (1994) and Fraser (1995). According to Fitzgerald et al. (2009:297), recognition is an "appropriate lens through which to examine and conceptualise participation, because it allows for a focus on identity (children's understanding of who they are) as well as on status (the ways in which they are able to fully participate in society)".

By the same logic, the counter-phenomenon of "misrecognition" (Taylor 1994:25) or "disrespect", as Honneth (1995:132) calls it, capturing "the withholding or withdrawing of recognition", obstructs (child) participation.

Recognition (*"Anerkennung"*) is the foundation of Honneth's (1995:2; 160–70) social theory around the "struggle for recognition", rooted in critical theory and aiming to understand the sources of "indignation" ("disrespect") and protest. However, the purpose of this conceptualisation is not to review the origins and criticisms of Honneth's recognition theory, as this was done before (Thomas 2012; Thompson 2006). Rather, the focus lies on transforming the concept into a tool to conceptualise children's participation rights which allows operationalisation in an empirical context.

3.1 Honneth's Three-Dimensional Concept of Recognition

Honneth's (1995:92–130) concept of recognition emphasises the multifaceted nature of recognition as encompassing three spheres: (i) "love", (ii) "rights", and (iii) "solidarity":

(i) In Honneth's (1995:95) sphere of "love", recognition is achieved through emotional relationships with friends, family and lovers. If successful, these relationships can lead to a mutual "recognition involving the cognitive acceptance of the other's independence" based on (self-)confidence (Honneth 1995:107).

(ii) The sphere of "rights" directs the focus to recognition in "legal relations", acknowledging the individual as "morally responsible" and legally entitled to participate in civil society (Honneth 1995:110). In turn, having rights and being able to exercise and claim them is the condition for an individual to establish self-respect (Honneth 1995:118–19). According to Honneth (1995:120) "[f]or, with the optional activity of taking legal recourse to a right, the individual now has available a symbolic means of expression whose social effectiveness can demonstrate to him, each time anew, that he or she is universally recognized as a morally responsible person". Here again, emphasis lies on the reciprocal nature of recognition but this time it plays out in civil society, the "community of rights" (Kiilakoski et al. 2020:39).

(iii) The "solidarity"-sphere inquires whether an individual is considered a community member (Honneth 1995:122). This depends on the individual's abilities and on how these conform with the social understanding of what is valuable (Honneth 1995:127). Solidarity results from success in such relationships: "Relationships of this sort can be said to be cases of 'solidarity', because they inspire not just passive tolerance but felt

concern for what is individual and particular about the other person" (Honneth 1995:129). Mutually achieving social esteem in relations thus depends on whether and how an individual fits into and contributes to a community.

3.2 Applying Honneth's Recognition Concept to Child Participation

The above is all the more important as children were excluded from the "rights"- and "solidarity"-spheres in Honneth's original understanding of recognition and only considered in the "love"-sphere as object-like beings (Thomas 2012:458). In Honneth's (1995:105) "love" recognition-sphere, the relationship between child and mother is one of co-dependence, meant to assure the baby's survival but also of fundamentally unequal nature. Despite this, Thomas (2012:458) argued that Honneth's recognition concept was applicable to children's participation rights once accepting: "(1) that children *do* belong to the class of morally responsible persons, are therefore rights-bearers and are entitled to respect; and (2) that children are people with talents and capabilities, who contribute in a variety of ways to society and culture, and so are deserving of esteem".

While Thomas' criticism is valid considering the standards established by the CRC and Childhood scholars (section 4.1), simply imposing this premise on Honneth's theory is problematic because it alters the theory's assumption of inequality in the adult-child relation.

Instead, this thesis turns these dichotomous positions into an asset in placing Honneth's "default position" of children as objects (Thomas 2012:458) and Thomas' conception of children as subjects at two ends of a matrix of recognition-spheres (section 6.3). Consequently, rethinking the recognition-spheres will illustrate that recognition, like children's participation, is not simply dichotomous but multifaceted.

4. State of the Art: The Intellectual Roots of Children's Participation Rights

This chapter provides a telegraphic overview of the literature on child participation rights (4.1) and the different functions of "images of children" (4.2).

4.1 The Research Field(s) on Children's Participation Rights

Though children's societal role has interested humankind for centuries (Ariès 1960), increased academic interest in children's (participation) rights can be traced back to:

(i) the birth of the CRC (1989), which enshrined children's participation rights in several of its articles, among which Article 12, the right to be heard, figures as "lynchpin" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009:18);

(ii) the growing prominence of the "actor-oriented approach" (Abebe 2019:4) in social sciences, translated into the "New Sociology of Childhood" (James and James 2008; James and Prout 2015; Jenks 2005; Qvortrup 1985), also known as Childhood Studies.

This culminated in a counter-paradigm to patriarchal traditions portraying the child as object, which were (and sometimes still are) ingrained in the academic world and society (Hanson 2012:73–74; James and Prout 2015:1–2).

This new paradigm, built around several mantras, rests on the idea that children are competent social actors (James and Prout 2015:7–9). Illustrated through the image of the child as a "human being" instead of a "human becoming" (Qvortrup 1985:132) this also became the founding premise of Children's Rights Studies emerging towards the end of the 20th century (Hanson 2012; Verhellen 2015). More recently, Critical Children's Rights Studies started rethinking children's rights independently from the mirror-image of the CRC (Reynaert, Bie, and Vandevelde 2012). This move was accompanied by a re-conceptualisation of the notion of children's agency away from dichotomised representations opposing e.g., the "incompetent" and the "competent" child (Hartung 2017:68). Instead children's agency appears increasingly as "interdependent" and as "continuum" of experiences (Abebe 2019:8–12) and children's participation as a "dialogue" between adults and children (Fitzgerald et al. 2009:300).

The recognition concept presents child participation as depending on the cultural and social factors surrounding the child rather than the actions of the child itself (Abebe 2019:2; Bessant 2020:235; Fitzgerald et al. 2009:300). Thinking of recognition as a resource (Daly 2020:348) illustrates that agency and subjectivity, as a form of children's self-recognition (Smith 2012:31), can only be achieved together with social recognition: Only when recognised in society can the child participate.

4.2 Images of Children

Images of children represent the cultural understanding of children's societal role encompassing a mix of norms, values, traditions and welfare attitudes: Verhellen (2015:44) explained that, "[c]hild-images capture the way in which children and childhood can be understood in a diversity of cultures, contexts, discourses and perspectives. […], the way we look at and deal with children is determined not only by biological factors, but also by the social and cultural contexts and practices".

The research on "guiding images" (*"Leitbilder"*) provides a toolkit for investigating child representations (Betz, Bischoff-Pabst, and Moll 2020:20). Giesel (2007) differentiates between several types of "guiding images" including the following:

(i) "implicit guiding images" (*"Implizite Leitbilder"*) structure "thought and actions" (*"Denken und Handeln"*) and are "mentally incorporated" (*"mental verankert"*) (Giesel 2007:194–95). They can be approximated to conceptions;

(ii) "explicit guiding images" (*"Explizite Leitbilder"*) are manifestly propagated as wished projections but not yet "mentally incorporated" or practised (Giesel 2007:194–95). They figure in political guidelines and policy (Betz and Bischoff 2018);

(iii) "explicated guiding images" ("*Explizierte Leitbilder"*) are verbal expressions of "implicit guiding images" (Giesel 2007:194–95). These images can arise e.g., in political speech acts.

Extrapolating from this, the literature at the intersection of child participation rights, images and policy can be structured around three functions of child images through which they represent cultural norms, attitudes and values (Smith 2012:34; Verhellen 2015:44), essential for children's recognition. Firstly, child images can translate abstract societal, cultural, political or historical approaches to children into figurative elements (Hanson 2012:66) and provide analysis-lenses for political forms of expressions (Bray and Nakata 2020) (4.2.1). Secondly, images present a categorising function for bundling individual beliefs and trends of cultural values, making them useful categories for document analyses (4.2.2). Thirdly, child images fulfil a normative function in capturing societal norms around children's societal role, underlying e.g., policy targets (4.2.3).

The images discussed below will be matched with the recognition matrix-spheres as codes for the document analysis (section 6.3).

4.2.1 Translating and Uncovering: Images of Children as Figurative Elements

Inspecting the first function, Jenks (2005:62–65) reduced traditional societal approaches to children to the images of the "Dionysian child" (the immoral and threatening child) and the "Apollonian child" (the vulnerable (Betz 2014:782) and innocent child). Since innocence is attached to a "romanticised view" of children (Baader 2016:139–41; Hartung 2017:13), the "Apollonian child" best relates to Honneth's (1995:95) "love"-recognition-sphere. The "Dionysian child" captures the moral dimension of legal recognition (Honneth's (1995:107) "rights"-recognition-sphere).

But child images can also be instrumentalised for political purposes (Liebel and Saadi 2012:164) portraying children as "objects of social investment" (Kjørholt 2013:247–48). Building on Jenks' two child images, Smith (2012:34) conceptualised the "Athenian child" incorporating the contradictory notion of child competence and subjectivity (section 2.2), as bearing the potential for participation but also the danger of "future-oriented" instrumentalisation.

The "Athenian child" thus captures the dynamic of Honneth's (1995:127) "solidarity"-recognition-sphere, where community-inclusion can be denied due to (assumed) incompetence. Political child representations portraying children as de-subjectified "denizens" (≠ citizens) excluded from the right to vote relate to perceptions that children are "'minors' and are always by the nature deficient" (Bessant 2020:235). Child citizenship scholars argue that children are entitled to citizenship, even though, in practice, the child is often portrayed as "citizens of the future" or future citizens (Lister 2007:716) rather than "active citizens" (Theis 2009:343–55). The excluded child figure is also exploited in political discourse as "risk" or problem (Harrikari 2013:70) and as instrumentalised political resource or "potential adversary" (Bray and Nakata 2020:34–35). In the Nordic countries, young people are mostly portrayed as resources for themselves rather than for others (Wallace and Bendit 2009:444).

4.2.2 Classifying: Images of Children as Cultural Country Approaches

Turning to the second function, the question is whether child images can capture country attitudes towards children. James and James (2008:4) placed child-conceptions on a

"continuum" of European policies with "at the one end, countries in which children are recognized as social actors […] (e.g. Scandinavia) […] and, at the other, those in which children are […] the workforce of the future (e.g. the UK)". However, a classification of country-attitudes towards children and their participation for use in empirical analyses has not yet been established.

Trying to capture country-specific child attitudes presents the danger of one-size-fits-all images ignoring children's realities (Lister 2007:698), sometimes conflicting policy-approaches within one country (Heimer and Palme 2021:410) and meddling children portrayals "as bearers of rights", "as future citizens", "as resources", and "as an 'endangered people'" (Kjørholt 2002:66).

Alternatively, spectra provide a looser classification that can fine-tune country-positions: O'Mahony (2019:432) developed three spectra to measure "the visibility" and "agency" of children and "the enforceability" of their rights in European constitutions. According to Habashi et al. (2010:268), "[c]hildren's images, or lack thereof, in a constitution and its amendments not only reflect the conditions of the time, but also relate the debate regarding general practice, culture, state ideology […]". As written testimonials of a state's tradition, culture and values, constitutions provide a multi-dimensional basis to establish a country's position as spectra of "images of children" (Habashi et al. 2010; O'Mahony 2019).

4.2.3 Normative Function: Images of Children as Policy Targets

Scrutinising the third function of child images, scholars disagree about whether policy targets reveal or inspire childhood conceptions: Dahmen (2014:156) argued that "the 'construction' of childhood and youth happens mainly through the construction of target groups within social and educational policies". In contrast, Therborn (1996:36) argued that historically "'the child' had to emerge from under the shadow of 'the family'" before a policy-shift from family towards children could happen. Although the CRC acted as "game changer" (Heimer and Palme 2021:405), the dependent child remains hidden behind the family in a "sheltered childhood" (*"behütete Kindheit"*) (Bühler-Niederberger 2020:16), as object of education (Heimer and Palme 2021:415) and subordinate rights-holder (Schutter 2017:384) in many countries.

Just like the child as *subject to* is the false friend of the child as subject, the label "child-centred" is not synonymous to meaningful child policy (Daly 2020:344): While Childhood scholars understood this concept as focusing on children as competent actors (Strandell 2010:179), social-investment logics redefined child-centredness as progress-oriented policy-ideal (Betz et al. 2020:12–13). Strandell (2010:180) cautioned that "[c]hild-centred or child-friendly […] often point towards an interest in children as adult workers and citizens of the future rather than towards an interest in the perspectives of children as children". In turn, policy is considered "really" child-centred (= meaningful) when recognising children as subjects of policy (Heimer and Palme 2021:410; Daly 2020:356).

5. Turning Rights into Realities in the EU

This chapter introduces international and European frameworks for child participation rights and their underlying images (5.1–5.2), highlights the role of EU Member States and cultural attitudes for meaningful EU child participation policy (5.3), and discusses potential limits (5.4).

5.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Council of Europe

Beyond Article 12, the CRC enshrined other participation rights such as "freedom of expression" (Article 13), "freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (Article 14), "freedom of association and peaceful assembly" (Article 15) and "access to information" (Article 17) (United Nations 1989). Since the CRC also contains protection and provision rights, it promotes a "holistic childhood image" (Verhellen 2015:50) embracing the child as both "incompetent" and "autonomous" (Reynaert et al. 2012:158). The CRC, however, does not confer political rights to the child.

As European child participation pioneer, the Council of Europe tackles child participation most prominently in its *Recommendation on the Participation of Children and Young People under the Age of 18* (Council of Europe 2012) and its "Child Participation Assessment Tool", recommended by the Commission to EU Member States (European Commission 2021b:5).

5.2 The EU's Children's Rights Framework: Competences and Images

While Article 24 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (European Union 2012) comprises the child's right to participate, provisions of the Charter are "legally binding for the Member States only where they act within the scope of EU law" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights et al. 2015:23). Moreover, children's rights protection is one of the EU's internal and external policy objectives set out in Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty (European Union 2007). But, as Schuurman and Stalford (2011:398) emphasised, this legal framework is not a "carte blanche" for the EU to establish binding child rights principles. Rather, the "EU's competence to legislate on child rights needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights et al. 2015:22). EU Directives relating to children address mainly (child) data and consumer protection, migration and criminal justice (European Commission 2021a). Regarding children's right to participate, the EU cannot issue binding requirements to Member-State-actors (Day et al. 2015:190; Janta et al. 2021:82).

Policy references to the child's right to participate appear prominently in the Commission's *EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child* (2021b) and the Commission's Communication *An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child* (2011). They also appear in the soft law instruments *Commission Recommendation on Investing in Children* (2013) and the *European Pillar of Social Rights* (2017). While these are not legally binding for Member States they reveal "the EU's normative and methodological approach to children's rights law […] located within an ethic of child protection, participation and non-discrimination" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights et al. 2015:22).[3] Although the *Council Recommendation Establishing a European Child Guarantee* refers to child participation, in relating closely to the *European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*, it tackles children's "social exclusion" more than participation (Council of the European Union 2021b:7).

Stalford and Iusmen (2015:81–82; 315) accused the Commission of perpetuating a mantra of child protection over participation, failing to portray children as "active citizens". Iusmen (2018:115) interpreted the Commission's long-term adherence to a "needs-based" rather than a "rights-based approach" as a signal to the Member States that it will not overstep "its mark vis-a-vis the protection of children's rights, particularly as this policy area is politically sensitive at the domestic level".

[3] A list of EU *acquis* and policy documents on child rights, including recent Commission communications mentioning children's participation, was annexed to the *EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child* (European Commission 2021a).

Others report that the EU represents youth and children in a future-oriented manner, as investment rather than for what they are now (Dahmen 2014:156). One explanation is the EU's "turn to social investment" (Hemerijck 2018:811), as developed by Esping-Andersen (2002; Lister 2003:427). Social investment fosters child-centredness but risks instrumentalising young child empowerment (Daly 2020:353) for societal progress and risk prevention (Dahmen 2014:157) rather than the child's fulfilment.

Though the new Child Rights Strategy could be interpreted as the Commission stretching its mandate towards more child participation, the strategy's success relies on Member-State-cooperation: In a resolution, the EP, which positioned itself as child rights defender with an EP Intergroup on Children's Rights, asked the "Council to adopt conclusions on the EU Strategy setting out a new mandatory framework for the EU institutions and the Member States […]" (2021:34). These conclusions, however, have yet to be formulated, with many previous conclusions, like the one adopted at the "Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council" (EYCS) in May 2021, having focused more on youth than children's participation (Council of the European Union 2021a).

This highlights the importance of Member States in realising child rights provisions both at the EU and national levels.

5.3 Why Focusing on EU Member States? What about Cultural Attitudes, Norms and Values?

Independently from EU initiatives, all EU Member States ratified the CRC and are bound to "[c]ombat negative attitudes, which impede the full realization of the child's right to be heard, […] to change widespread customary conceptions of the child" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009:12). This quote highlights the importance of attitudes and norms for the realisation of children's participation rights, which, in turn, encompasses (i) meaningful child participation practice and (ii) the establishment and implementation of meaningful policy or mechanisms.

Firstly, as Watson (2009:247) put it, "our own representation of the child" affects the meaningfulness of child rights provisions. Accordingly, EU reports (Janta et al. 2021:4; 69–70; 88; Day et al. 2015:138), and the new Commission Child Rights Strategy (European

Commission 2021b:4) portray adult attitudes towards children as key barrier to meaningful child participation in practice.

Secondly, the incorporation of the CRC has been linked to the perception and signalling of children as "rights-holders" (Hoffman and Thorburn Stern 2020:149), the existence of "a culture of respect for children's rights" (Lundy, Byrne, and Kilkelly 2013:453), or "legal and cultural traditions concerning family matters and individual rights" (Iusmen 2014:94).

But how *concretely* does this matter for the prospect of meaningful policy? Broadly put, policy development, across different policy stages, requires attention to an interplay of EU and national level factors (Treib 2014). Thus, this thesis does not argue that child images *alone* can predict the outcome of a concrete, meaningful child participation policy.

Rather, it sees child images with their three functions (section 4.2) as unifying indicators for both, the underlying directions along which policy, e.g. the "social investment strategy" (Betz and Bischoff 2018:51), is imagined, and the context in which it is received.

Thus, focusing on child images highlights two phases in the policy process (Heidbreder and Brandsma 2018:808–15):

(i) the "problem definition" phase where the policy target is established in dialogue with how the "policy-problem", here child image, is framed (Dahmen 2014:156; Iusmen 2015:337);

(ii) the "policy implementation", and more precisely, "application" phase (Treib 2014:6), where the policy approach interacts with societal approaches, or in the case of EU policy, meets national child approaches.

Taking the example of soft law, Hartlapp and Hofmann (2021:12) reported that Germany did not use the "steering instrument" *Recommendation on Investing in Children* because its focus on children did not fit the "German approach" centred on families. Though the authors focused less on the importance of national-level-factors than the effect of the provision's nature (Hartlapp and Hofmann 2021:16; 18), this preliminary finding can be carefully interpreted as indicating, for this case, that for soft law without a link to hard law, usage is limited, *all the more* if it does not fit the cultural approach, the "guiding image" (*"Leitbild"*) (Betz et al. 2020), at the national level.

5.4 Limits of Images of Children

5.4.1 Reductionism

Overall, concentrating on child images provides a reductionist approach. Many factors must be considered at every policy-stage for policy to become (meaningful) reality. Telegraphically for the transposition-stage, these are Member State capacity to comply with international norms (affected by administrative capabilities (Falkner, Hartlapp, and Treib 2007) and number of veto players (Treib 2014:31)). Another factor is Member State willingness, influenced e.g., by "the goodness of fit" between "policy goals enshrined in European legislation and pre-existing domestic policy legacies" (Treib 2014:23). Moreover, Schuurman (2015:56–58) pointed out that whether Member States push children's rights in the Council of the EU depends on the "willingness" of political actors. All these are factors that the present author does not dismiss.

Rather, as illustrated for the example of the *Recommendation on Investing in Children*, cultural attitudes and norms are seen here as *emphasisers* or *amplifiers* for other factors, emphasising actors' perception (Betz and Bischoff 2018:54; Giesel 2007:194) and thus political willingness in given settings (Day et al. 2015:138) to realise children's participation rights. The author is aware that this simplifies a complex process encompassing many factors. However, this simplifying focus is necessary to inspect a normative dimension frequently left out, due to its abstract nature, in the conception of new, or evaluation of existing policy.

5.4.2 Intentions, Authenticity and Credibility

One challenge working with child images arises where national child norms collide with EU-Presidency norms, namely where intentions behind child images are driven by unrelated political objectives and images are thus unauthentic: In Presidencies, countries lose nothing from signalling a positive attitude towards children, as the (non-)implementation of child policy remains ultimately with them and showing openness towards European values can benefit their reputation, especially in the case of newer Member States (Niemann and Mak 2010:734).

While this thesis focuses on child images themselves, the question *why* politicians present an image sensitises towards differentiating between the authenticity of images and credibility of speakers. The angle and data of this thesis limit the scope of author-credibility that can be

established. However, it can provide indications for authenticity, understood as overall fit of the most dominant child images presented by governmental actors in Presidencies compared to national trends, evaluated through the recognition-concept. This rests on the assumption that the established national child approach captures national trends (section 7).

6. Methodology and Research Design

6.1 Case Selection

In combining descriptive and comparative elements (within and between countries or here: vertical and horizontal), the present case study comes closest to a "collective case study" (Stake 1994:237) with the qualitative research objective of exploring the empirical viability of a normative approach through the description and comparison of child images to investigate the prospect of meaningful EU child participation policy. In a "collective case study", cases "may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having voice. […] understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake 1994:237). Thus, it is helpful to follow criteria to ensure that the countries chosen

(i) illustrate the EU's diversity, increasing the chances that they capture different aspects of the concept of recognition, and for comparability reasons,

(ii) held the Presidency in recent, timely proximity.

First, despite lacking a typology for national child approaches (section 4.2.2), the literature provides possibilities for distinguishing countries according to implicit child (participation) conceptions, ranging from family images (Skevik 2003:425) to political and civic culture (Almond and Verba 1963)[4]. Across the typological proposals, Esping-Andersen's welfare regime model (1990) stands out precisely because it was not designed to capture "children as a separate unit of analysis" (Heimer and Palme 2021:408). In overlooking children (Skevik 2003:424), it reflects implicit cultural child approaches (Pfau-Effinger 2005:10–12).

[4] Civic culture matters for research on democratic participation and lowering the voting age (Bessant 2020; Walther et al. 2020). But since children below eighteen are excluded from traditional political participation, the democratic civic culture is merely a component of the understanding of children's societal position: Realising child participation depends on child perceptions, not the "attitude towards participation" (Verhellen 2015:52).

In this context, one "can learn the most" (Stake 1994:243) from Romania, Germany and Finland. Finland pertains to the Nordic and "social democratic" welfare-regime, and Germany to the Continental and "conservative" (Esping-Andersen 1990:111–14). Both Germany and Finland illustrate their welfare-regime, despite having undergone social-investment- and austerity-related policy-shifts (Betz and Bischoff 2018; Harrikari 2013:59–60; Nyby et al. 2018; Riedel and Klinkhammer 2018:49–50). For Meuth, Warth and Walther (2014:82), in the Nordic or "universalist regime", as they call it, "children and young people enjoy individual social rights", whereas in the "conservative or employment-centred regime" of Germany, "social rights vary according to family and employment status".

Originally, Romania did not figure in Esping-Andersen's model: Romania, is generally counted towards the Central and Eastern European states, although scholars disagree whether these states form one separate "post-communist welfare regime" because of different welfare policy mixes (Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2019:149). However, Central and Eastern European states differ less among each other than compared to other European countries (Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2019:149; 158). Thus, Romania will be understood here as Central and Eastern European state differing from Finland's and Germany's welfare regimes.

Second, the three countries had their Presidency in temporal proximity (Council of the European Union 2016):

(i) Romania: January 1, 2019, to June 30, 2019;
(ii) Finland: July 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019;
(iii) Germany: July 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020.

Another argument for choosing Germany was avoiding having three Presidencies from the same "Trio-Presidency"[5], which would have been the case if choosing Croatia (Council of the European Union 2016). Presidencies provide a suitable setting because they put countries in the EU's spotlight (Niemann and Mak 2010:729), obliging them to take an explicit or implicit stance on children (Schuurman 2015:58).

[5] Trio-Presidencies provide "the framework for three successive presidencies to cooperate with each other more closely and in an organised manner" (Raik 2015:20–21).

6.2 Research Approach

The thesis' research design is qualitative and based on a normative concept to assess what child images presented in Presidencies reveal about the prospect of meaningful EU child participation policy. Given the lack of a systematic method to analyse child images (Giesel 2007:197), this thesis follows Betz and Bischoff (2018) in focusing on documents to identify images, and O'Mahony's spectrum-approach (2019) (i) for establishing national child approaches and (ii) as inspiration for the recognition-matrix (section 6.3).

In the absence of hypotheses, working with a matrix incorporating the ideal type of the child as subject maps out child images to be expected in EU countries. As discussed in section 4.2.2, an empirically applicable classification of societal child approaches in European countries is both, missing and bears potential pitfalls. This adds an exploratory note to the present approach and explains the selection of matrix-images over pre-defined hypotheses. However, the final discussion develops concrete avenues for future research on which testable hypotheses could be built.

At the national level, child approaches are established through existing research and located in matrix-spheres. Besides considerations of feasibility, academic literature seemed more conducive to establish authentic child approaches than too few expert interviews bearing the danger of subjectivity.

At the Presidency-level, child images result from a document analysis evaluated in three assessments. First, by placing the images in the matrix to establish how they relate to the ideal image of the child as subject. Second, by analysing how the images relate to each other. Third, by comparing the images to the national child approach.

The prospect of meaningful policy is thus constituted through the proximity of the Presidency images to the ideal image, compatibility and authenticity, as meaningful policy must be both implementable and transport a meaningful understanding of the child (section 2.3). The parameters for establishing fits between levels are (i) whether the images reflect an understanding of child as object/subject and (ii) the recognition-sphere where they are located. A match on (i) provides a sufficient condition for compatibility.

6.3 Matrix with a Spectrum-Approach ("Operationalisation")

The matrix was established by attributing child images from the discussed literature to the dimensions (love, rights and solidarity) of Honneth's (1995) recognition concept. All dimensions present a subject-side (Honneth's understanding) and an object-side (Thomas' (2012) understanding). Jenks' (2005) and Smith's (2012) main images (Apollonian, Dionysian and Athenian) provide guiding images for each sphere, which can be declined in a meaningful (subject-side) and unmeaningful way (object-side).

Thus, this multi-dimensional framework (figure 1), comprising 10 main- and 13 sub-images, illustrates the manifoldness of object- and subject-portrayals. It also provides a way to evaluate what child images reveal about meaningful child participation provisions. The matrix-child-images figure as codes for the document analysis.

The recognition-spheres are gradual (Kiilakoski et al. 2020:38), though not mutually exclusive. This means that the subject-images in the solidarity-sphere are more conducive to societal recognition, but children can be portrayed as vulnerable (object-love-sphere) and competent community members (subject-solidarity-sphere) in the same context (see section 4.2.1). Inspired by O'Mahony's (2019) agency-spectrum, this hierarchical organisation provides two gradual spectra: On the subject-spectrum, the closer the image to the solidarity-sphere, the more meaningful the subjecthood. On the object-spectrum, the closer to the solidarity-sphere, the more instrumental (unmeaningfully child-centred) an image. This isolates the portrayal of the child as full *subject* from the child as *subject to*.

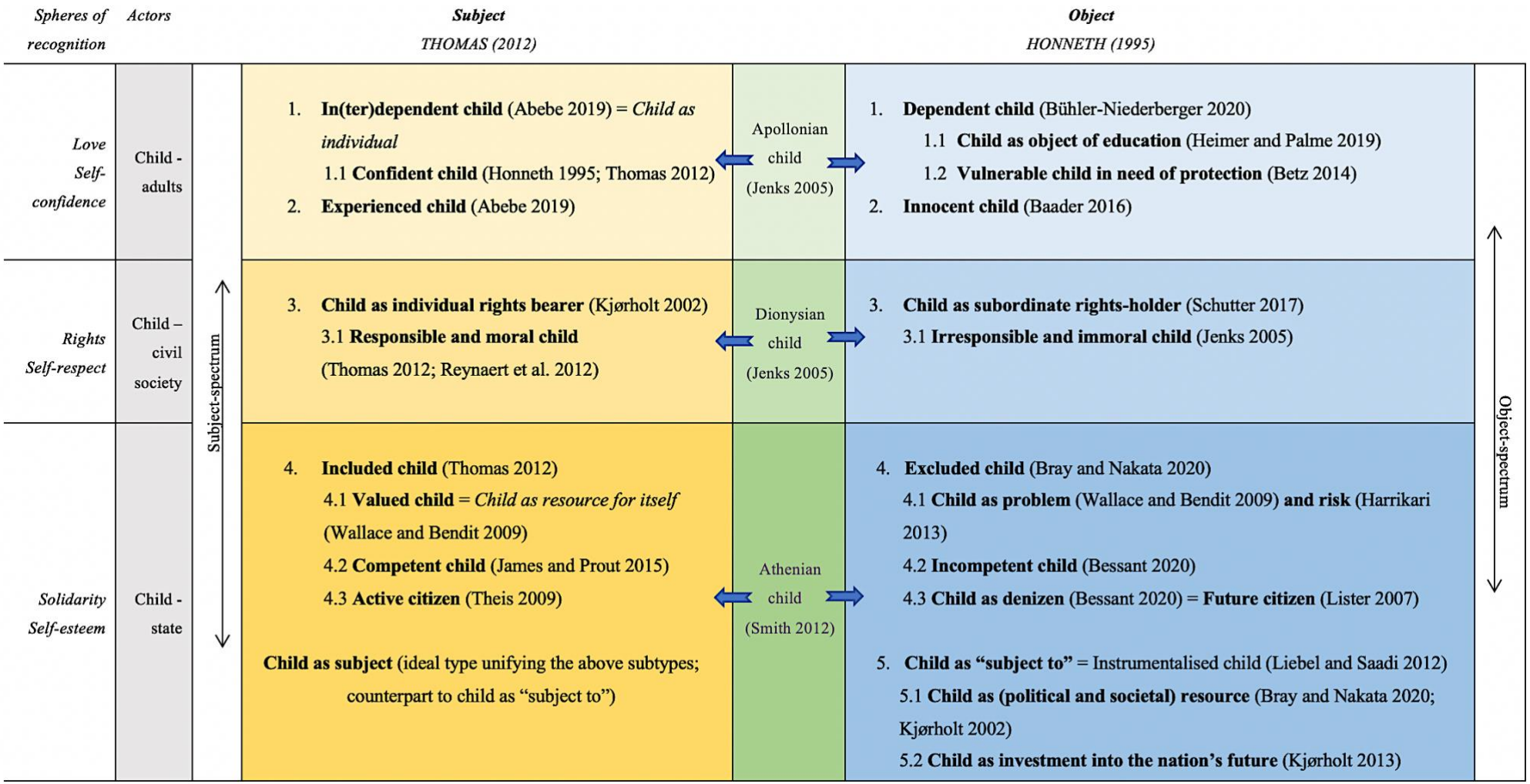

Figure 1: Recognition-Matrix: Honneth's (1995:129) structure of relations of recognition distinguished by subject/object as categories for children's images (illustration by the present author)

Images placed in the love-sphere, such as the dependent, vulnerable and innocent child (object-side) and the in(ter)dependent and experienced child (subject-side) reflect recognition based on emotional dynamics.[6] Images linked to children's legal status (e.g., child as subordinate rights-holder) appear in the rights-sphere. Images in the solidarity-sphere reflect esteem-related recognition of community members: The above-mentioned Commission-study on child participation highlighted that viewing children's opinions as "not valuable" rather than considering them as "active citizens" directly harmed "young people's self-esteem and might contribute to alienating them from the political and democratic process" (Janta et al. 2021:4; 88). Thus, the solidarity-sphere contains images of the valued, the competent child and the child as active citizen, reflecting the tripartite definition of child as *subject* (see section 2.2) as well as excluding and instrumentalising image-variations of the child as *subject to* (object-side).

While images are often implicit rather than explicit, words like vulnerability, competence or resource served as attributional indicators.

The analysis employs a simplified matrix without references:

Spheres of recognition	*Actors*		***Subject*** *THOMAS (2012)*		***Object*** *HONNETH (1995)*	
Love *Self-confidence*	Child - adults	Subject-spectrum	1. **In(ter)dependent child** = Child as individual 1.1 **Confident child** 2. **Experienced child**	Apollonian child (Jenks 2005)	1. **Dependent child** 1.1 **Child as object of education** 1.2 **Vulnerable child in need of protection** 2. **Innocent child**	Object-spectrum
Rights *Self-respect*	Child – civil society		3. **Child as individual rights bearer** 3.1 **Responsible and moral child**	Dionysian child (Jenks 2005)	3. **Child as subordinate rights-holder** 3.1 **Irresponsible and immoral child**	
Solidarity *Self-esteem*	Child - state		4. **Included child** 4.1 **Valued child** 4.2 **Competent child** 4.3 **Active citizen** **Child as subject**	Athenian child (Smith 2012)	4. **Excluded child** 4.1 **Child as problem and risk** 4.2 **Incompetent child** 4.3 **Child as denizen = Future citizen** 5. **Child as "subject to" = Instrumentalised child** 5.1 **Child as (political and societal) resource** 5.2 **Child as investment into the nation's future**	

Figure 2: Simplified Recognition-Matrix

[6] See Appendix B for code definitions.

6.4 Document Analysis

The document analysis draws upon Kuckartz' (2014:36) "Thematic Qualitative Text Analysis", which is "rule-guided and intersubjective but also interpretive and creative" and employs a clear code system.

First, child references in Presidency-documents were attributed to the child images in the matrix, which served as code-system of deductively developed categories[7]. The smallest coding-unit was clauses. Second, a more quantitative component established the most dominant images followed by a qualitative interpretation of these findings. Finally, this thesis performed a category-based evaluation (Kuckartz 2014:137): For each Presidency, dominant child images were assessed according to their position in the matrix-spheres.

Analysis-reliability was achieved through the double-coding of large parts of the material, three months apart. Moreover, the transparency with which the matrix and codes were defined and applied (see Appendix B and C) increases the results' intersubjective traceability.

6.5 Data

For each Presidency, the same type of documents was selected to establish the child images along Scott's (1990:19–31) "quality control criteria" ("authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning"). Establishing the document "authenticity" and "credibility" (Scott 1990:21–22) echoes reasonings discussed regarding the authenticity of child images (section 5.4.2): While "Trio-Presidencies" provide a control-mechanism for "national interests" (Raik 2015:30), this also means that Presidency child images, especially in Council conclusions, risk being modified versions of national positions of the current government.

To counter this, speech acts at Presidency-events, such as Council meetings, conferences or EP-debates, as well as during two European Fora on the Rights of the Child and EU Youth Conferences, were chosen as main sources because they enable an author-identification (Scott 1990:19–20) and thus a selection of only government-representatives, defending national

[7] See Appendix B for a code definitions and typical examples of code attribution and Appendix C for all coded segments.

positions.[8] Given that Presidencies (section 5.4.2) and the selected speech-settings, in particular, invite progressive child attitudes, employing a recognition-matrix to differentiate between (un)meaningful images is even more important.

To address speech-"meaning" and concerns of author-"credibility", speech-context-information (Scott 1990:21–22; 31) were made explicit (see Appendix A). The analysis of speech acts, from shorter press-statements to longer EP-speeches, focuses on distilling Member-State-tendencies towards children, not speaker-positions tainted by personal background and party-affiliation. Presidencies serve as temporary frame providing a balance between feasibility and representativeness regarding the speaker-variety and settings.

The documents are "representative" because they bundle "relevant" (Scott 1990:24) Presidency-documents mentioning children. As cross-cutting issue, children's rights cannot be attributed to one Council-configuration, especially since youth- and child-definitions overlap (section 2.1). However, after identifying the EYCS as most interesting child-image-source, other Council formations, except for the "Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council" (EPSCO) in one instance, were not considered. Where speech acts consisted in Council-session-transcripts[9], these were complemented by Presidency-discussion-papers and Presidency-programmes providing overarching Presidency-directions on children. What renders these documents comparable is that they mention children (target group) more than they address them (target audience) (see Appendix A).

This way, 52 speech acts and documents were selected (see Appendix A for a list per country and speaker). Although Council conclusions are unsuitable as exclusive analysis-material, one relevant Council conclusion was solicited per Presidency to get an additional perspective on speech acts. They were not employed to establish Presidency child images.

[8] Documents were made identifiable as follows: Country Prefix–Speaker Prefix–Document Type–Date (Year-Month-Day)–Number:Paragraph/Page. For pdf-documents the reference refers to page-numbers (corresponding to the MAXQDA-software numbering), for transcribed word-documents to paragraphs.

[9] For the transcription, Kuckartz' (2014:122–29) transcription-rules were slightly adapted, as transcription here related to videos of e.g. speech acts of one actor in larger settings, not interviews. Thus, for example, omissions of other speech acts were marked with "[…]". The language was "smoothed" (Kuckartz 2014:125).

7. Description and Analysis of National and Presidency Child Images

Firstly, this chapter establishes which matrix-area best captures the countries' national approach(es) to children, balancing broader historically dominant national child images against newer reformist child approaches (Pfau-Effinger 2005:6). The aim is achieving an indicative tendency as benchmark for analysing Presidency child images, not an absolute statement on the country's political stance, administrative structures, or legislation on children's rights. The starting point for establishing national child approaches in the matrix is O'Mahony's (2019) analysis of constitutional child images on his agency-spectrum (figure 3), completed with literature and EU reports on the countries' child (rights) situation.

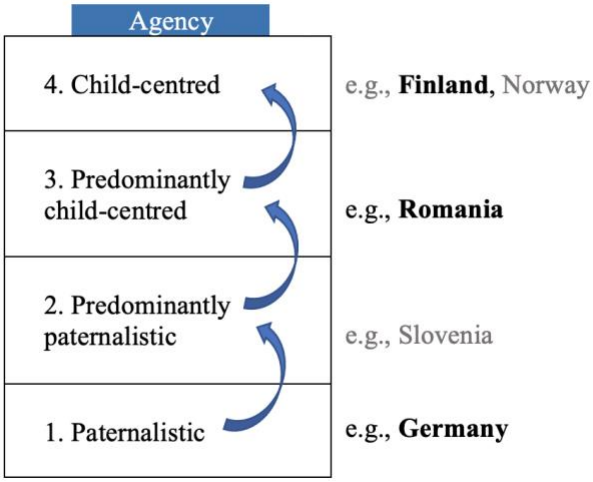

Figure 3: Own Illustration following O'Mahony's (2019:432) Constitutional Child Rights Agency Spectrum

O'Mahony's (2019:408–9) category for "child-centred" constitutions is considered meaningful since it rests on the image of the child as subject.

Secondly, each national child approach section will be followed by the document analysis of the respective Presidency.

7.1 Romania

7.1.1 National Child Approach

Romania's Constitution (1991) presents a broader notion of child participation than most European constitutions (Habashi et al. 2010:280; O'Mahony 2019:422): Article 49(5) presents it as a state-matter, stipulating that "public authorities are bound to contribute to secure the

conditions for the free participation of young people in the political, social, economic, cultural and sporting life of the country" (Constitution of Romania, 1991).

On the "agency-spectrum", O'Mahony (2019:432) ranked Romania's Constitution as "predominantly child-centred" (figure 3). But at the same time, the Constitution "mixes the language of paternalism and protection with the language of rights, autonomy and participation" (O'Mahony 2019:422). This in-between stage gets meaning when considering Romania's history of child conceptions: On the one hand, the Bucharest School of Sociology at the beginning of the 20th century reserved a prominent societal place to the child (Stanciulescu 2010:318). But on the other hand, this understanding of children withered away during the Communist years. Retrospectively it appeared as an exception to the Romanian "political attitudes towards children" anchored over the centuries that Stanciulescu (2010:320) broke down to "instrumentalization-protection" and "sentimentalization-protection". While "sentimentalization-protection" refers to the Romanian emphasis put on the poor "child in difficulty" (Stanciulescu 2010:317; Bühler-Niederberger 2010:376), "instrumentalization-protection" gets meaning when contextualising the Constitution.

1991, the year the new Romanian Constitution was adopted, also marked the climax of the corrupted Romanian international adoption market resulting from the Communist legacy of overfilled childcare institutions (Iusmen 2014:56–57). Until the 2000s, Romania was notorious for its catastrophic child adoption situation. When Romania showed interest in joining the EU, it became clear that this system needed reformation: Paradoxically, it was in trying to impose child-rights-guidelines on Romania that the EU itself noticed that its own child rights system did not deserve its name (Iusmen 2014:63). As such, Romania's child conditions became an impetus for the development of the Commission's Communication *Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child* (Commission of the EC 2006; Iusmen 2014:101). Parallelly, Romania's *Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child* (272/2004), presented by the Romanian government but *de facto* drafted by European experts, was hailed as "one of the most advanced legislative frameworks on children's rights in Europe" (Iusmen 2014:82).

Thus, rather than internally-fuelled, the new Romanian child rights direction was imposed by the EU (Iusmen 2014:73). As such, for Stanciulescu (2010:325), the child rights provision are purely opportunistic: "Law 272/2004 fits well the UN Convention and European recommendations, even though it does not always fit Romanian contexts". An anonymous

Romanian minister stated in the "Commission Evaluation of Legislation, Policy and Practice of Child Participation in the EU" that "[a] mentality persists in which the adult is legitimised to be the decision-maker in all aspects of the child's life" (Day et al. 2015:140). Put differently, the constitutional rights and the child rights law seem like window-dressings directed more to the international audience than the national children, with "instrumentalization-protection" providing the baseline to child-portrayals as "the very future of the nation" (Stanciulescu 2010:323).

Given the divide between Romania's predominantly child-centred Constitution and traditional paternalistic attitudes, the object-solidarity matrix-sphere captures Romania's child attitudes of "instrumentalization-protection" hidden behind a poster-child Constitution.

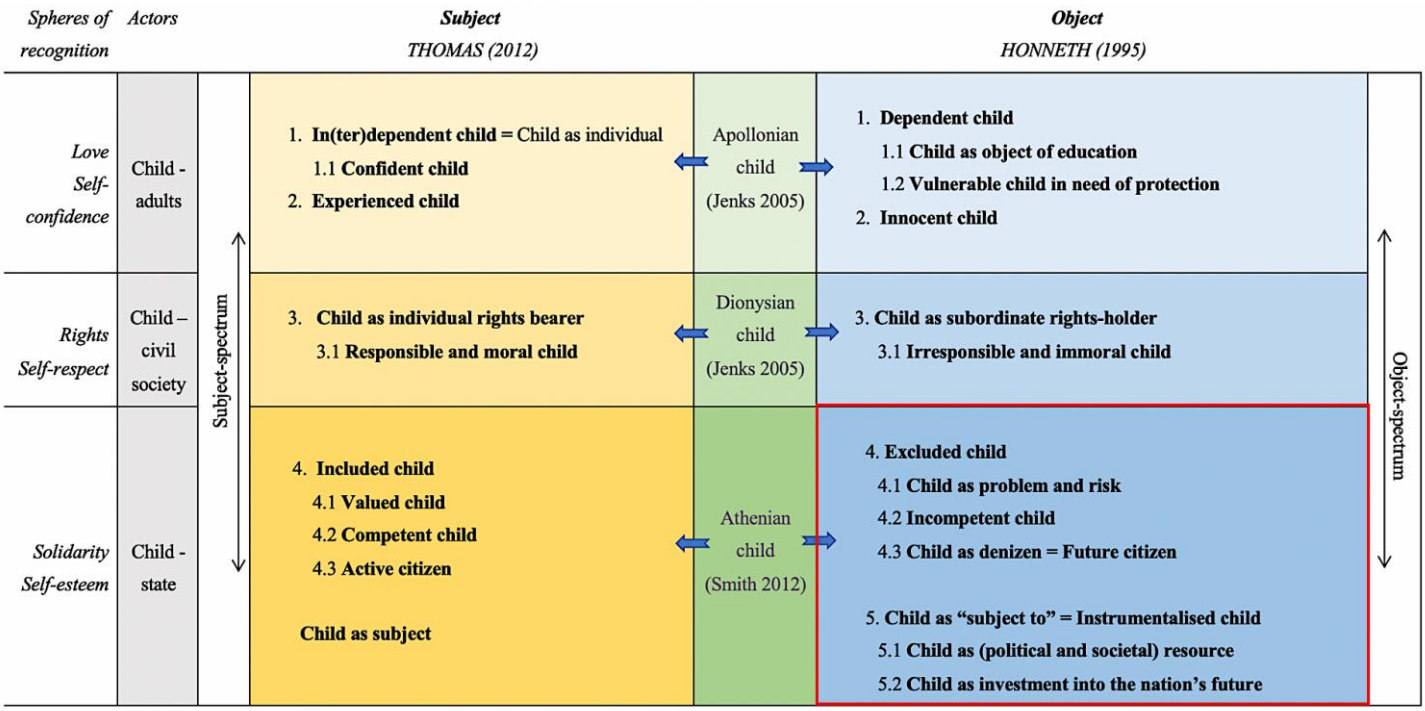

Figure 4: Romania's National Child Approach: Object-Solidarity Matrix-Sphere (Child–State)

7.1.2 Presidency Child Images

At first sight, Romania's Presidency presented the most promising role for children among the analysed Presidencies. The "Bucharest EU Children's Declaration", demanding meaningful EU child participation mechanisms, was drafted during the Presidency by children and UNICEF-Romania: Retrospectively, it was hailed as impetus for the EU institutions' growing interest in child participation (Janta et al. 2021:61). Moreover, Romania was the first Presidency to invite children to the EYCS and to have a child-friendly Presidency-website (UNICEF 2019:3; 10).

But analysing Presidency speeches by government-officials nuances this positive assessment as they predominantly reveal images of the child as object (see figure 5).

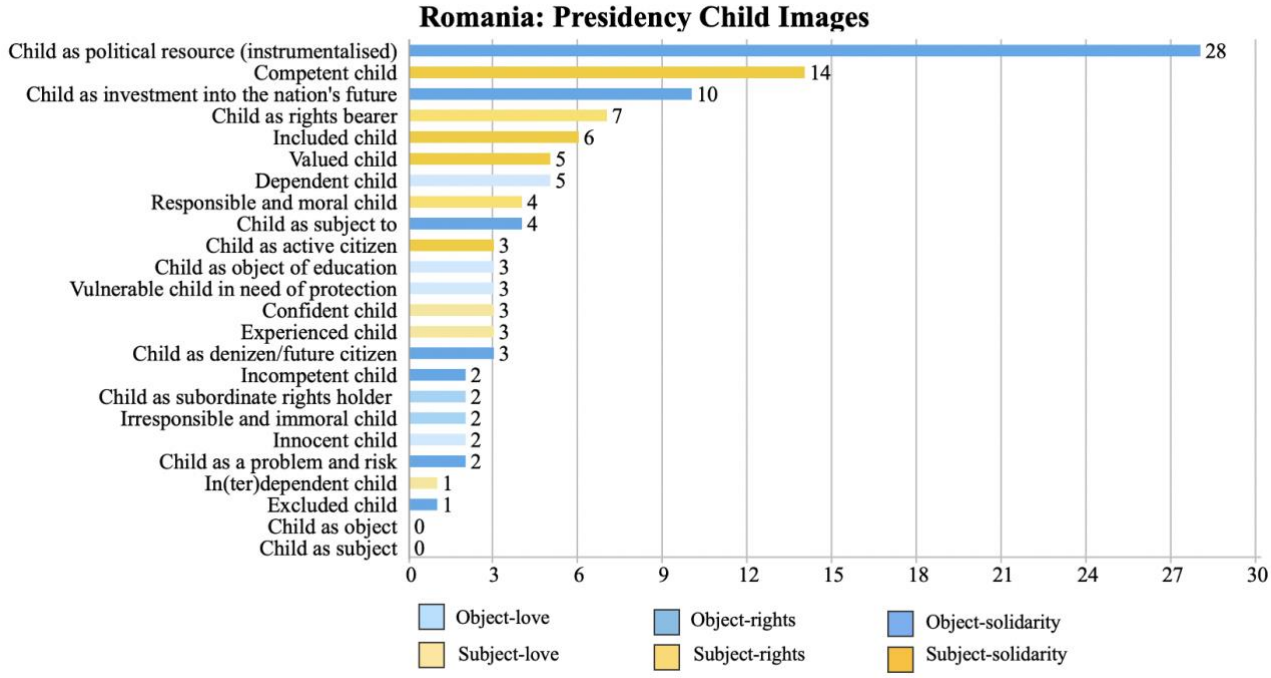

Figure 5: Frequency of Child Images in Romanian Presidency

7.1.2.1 The Child as Political Resource (Object-Solidarity-Sphere)

At the Conference "Children's Participation in Decision-Making and Policy-Making at European Union Level", both Romania's then Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă (RO-DĂ-SPA-190506-1:2) and then Minister of Labour and Social Justice Marius-Constantin Budăi (RO-SPA-(PR)-190506-1:1) presented the "Bucharest EU Children's Declaration" as helping to turn children's opinions into a "component" of EU-decision-making. This image of the child as merely consulted stakeholder was repeated by Dăncilă at the end of the Romanian Presidency (RO-DĂ-SPA-190703-1:27).

Similarly, children were "invited" to the EYCS-session by then Minister of Youth and Sports Constantin-Bogdan Matei as passive "young guests" and "observers to our policy debate" (RO-MA-SPA-(CS)-190522-1:7; 36): The Junior Ambassadors were neither involved in drafting the Presidency-discussion-paper nor the conclusions and resolutions but merely brought "positive energy" (RO-MA-SPA-(PC)-190522-2:4) to the decision-makers.

Ana Birchall, then Deputy Prime Minister of Romania, revealed the underlying logic behind these statements at the EU Youth Conference, stating that "Youth are the future of Romania, its strategic resource" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:10). Birchall applied the same rationale to children at the above-mentioned Child Participation Conference, stating that "We only need willpower to ensure a future in which children's voices can be heard" (RO-BI-SPA-(PR)-190506-1:1), presenting child participation as a token which adults can activate.

Another reason why these statements are emblematic for the image of the child as resource (object-solidarity-sphere) is that mirroring the state-responsibility for child participation enshrined in Romania's Constitution, they highlight children's value for Romania, not the family or society: In motivating "young people of value and initiative to get more and more involved in as many areas of public life as possible, but especially in political life, in central and local administration or in diplomacy", Birchall's underlying reason for why "the voice of young people must be better heard", seemed to be Romania's reputation and "future" – not that of children (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:10-11).

7.1.2.2 The Included Child (Subject-Solidarity-Sphere): The Competent Child

Echoing Romania's Presidency-motto "Cohesion, a common European value", including children as active community members was mentioned both in the Presidency-programme (RO-PP-190115-1:68) and the Presidency-discussion-paper for the EYCS (RO-PDP-190522-1:3).

At the 12th Forum on the Rights of the Child, Gabriela Coman, then President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, referred to the Junior Ambassadors as "young colleague" and "brilliant children" (not as observer or stakeholder), calling child participation a "key element" (not merely a component) of policymaking (RO-CO-SPA-190402-1:5). Compared to the statements of Dăncilă, Budăi and Birchall, Coman's speech reflected the image of the competent child. But illustrating the fragility of such statements, on the following forum-day, Coman resolved to highlighting children's innocence, arguing against children's full participation because children "can be captured by the politician[s]" (RO-CO-SPA-190403-1:3). This also calls into question Coman's statement at a press-conference presenting Romania's Junior Ambassadors, that children are "citizens with equal rights as adults" (RO-SPA-(PR)-190306-1:13).

Moreover, Nelu Barbu, then government-spokesman, announced towards the Presidency's end that the Prime Minister would include a child as councillor in her government (RO-BA-SPA-(PC)-190612-1:6). However, since this promise never translated into action, it only reinforced Romania's tokenistic resource-based portrayal of children against that of competence.

7.1.2.3 The Child as Investment into the Nation's Future (Object-Solidarity-Sphere)

As Dăncilă highlighted in her message for the International Children's Day on June 1, 2019, "Romania has valuable, talented and creative children, whose potential we can highlight […] and their successes, at school, in personal development or in various competitions in which they participate is a guarantee that Romania is stepping right into the future" (RO-DĂ-SPA-(PR)-190601-1:1).

The same investment- and future-oriented view on young people, was expressed by Birchall during Romania's EU Youth Conference: "the government Viorica Dăncilă ensures the conviction that investing in young people is an investment in our future" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:11). The EYCS-Council *Conclusions on Young Creative Generations* enshrined this investment-approach based on young people's creativity (RO-CC-190605-1).

That investing in children, however, presupposes children to be valued (economically or emotionally) also transpired from Birchall's statement that "investing in education is not an expense, but a guarantee of a better future for present generations" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:9) – a future secured for "new generations here, at home, in Romania" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:10). This almost protective statement illustrates the fine line between children as investments (objects) and valued citizens deserving a bright future (subjects). According to Dăncilă, adults are "responsible for letting future generations have a stable and strong European Union" (RO-DĂ-SPA-190506-1:2). In the same speech, however, she portrayed children as rights bearers "entitled […] to contribute to the way we are envisaging the future of the European Union" (RO-DĂ-SPA-190506-1:2).

Finally, in reducing children's fulfilment to self-perpetuating role-model-material, Dăncilă summed up the misleading proximity between future-oriented subject- and object-portrayals on Romania's Children's Day: "I wish all children to grow up healthy, motivated to learn and to make a beautiful path in life, so that they, in turn, can be a good example to follow for future generations" (RO-DĂ-SPA-(PR)-190601-1:1).

Like for the national level, the notion of "instrumentalization-protection" captures the Romanian Presidency's predominantly unmeaningful child portrayal, placing it in the object-solidarity-sphere.

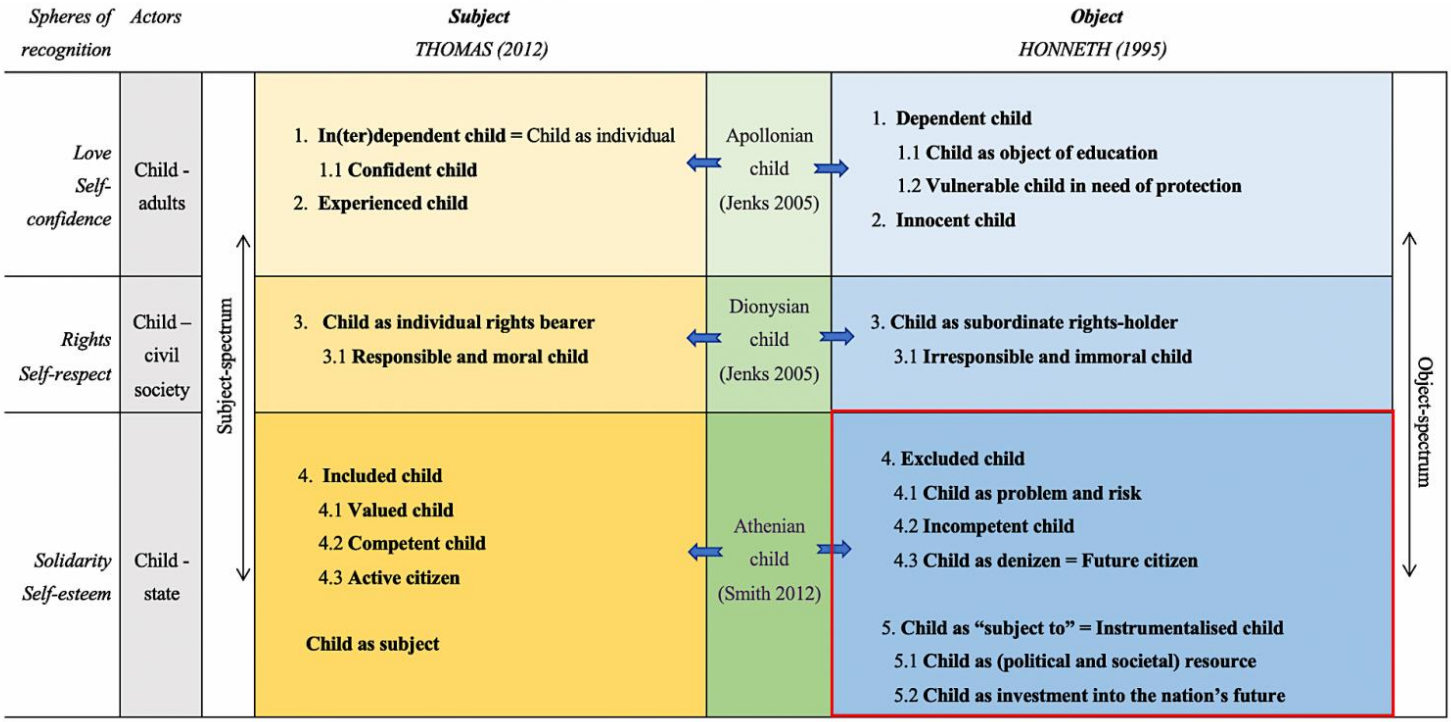

Figure 6: Romania's Presidency Child Approach: Object-Solidarity Matrix-Sphere (Child-State)

7.2 Germany

7.2.1 National Child Approach

In Germany, a bill from January 2021 to enshrine children's rights in the Basic Law failed as it was not expected to get a two-thirds majority in the German Bundestag and Bundesrat (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2021a). Although the constitutional amendment would not have altered the child's status as object, Christine Lambrecht, German Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection and for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth[10] saw it as missed opportunity to "anchor" children's rights as "guiding image" in Germany's Basic Law ("*Kinderrechte als sichtbares Leitbild in unserem Grundgesetz zu verankern*") (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2021b).

[10] Lambrecht replaced Franziska Giffey who was Family Minister during Germany's Presidency.

This is a testament to the existence of different child attitudes across parties – mirrored across Germany's federal states, largely responsible for child and youth policy directions (Meuth et al. 2014:80–81). However, as a unifying understanding of children is important in Council-Presidencies where Germany must speak with one voice, the national child approach is established at national level.

O'Mahony (2019:432) ranked Germany's Basic Law as "paternalistic" – below that of Finland and Romania (see figure 3). Limited child participation provisions figure in the *German Civil Code* (§ 1626 BGB) and in section 8 of Volume VIII of the *German Social Code* (§ 8 SGB VIII), the 1991 *Child and Youth Welfare Act* ("*Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz"*). According to Meuth et al. (2014:81), this focus on help ("*aid*") "reflects a historical path of dependency in a model that considers young people primarily as vulnerable rather than as citizens with their own interests and rights". A revision of this act approved in May 2021, promises more child participation while preserving the images of child protection and strong family (Bundesregierung 2021).

The German child-literature confirms this childhood-political public focus on parents, rather than children, portrayed as passive "products of parental effort" ("*Produkt elterlicher Anstrengungen*") (Bühler-Niederberger 2018:343) and "objects of political and pedagogical action" ("*Objekte politischen und pädagogischen Handelns*") without "independent position" ("*eigenständige Position*") (Betz and Bischoff 2018:49). Analysing child- and youth-legislation related to education since the German Empire, Schutter (2017:382–84) traced the deep-rooted child figure of subordinate rights-holder. Failing to include children's rights into the Basic Law illustrates how the "tension between parents' rights and children's rights" hinders the "acceptance" of children's rights (Lundy et al. 2013:453).

For Meuth et al. (2014:82), Germany's "conservative and employment-centered regime" excludes "young people under 27 who have not yet contributed to the social insurance system […] and therefore depend on their families". This also explains Germany's focus on protection rather than participation (rights) for young people and children (Meuth et al. 2014:82; Wallace and Bendit 2009:446).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the image of the child at risk and threat appeared in German political discourse and reports emphasising the importance of parents for the child's development (Betz 2014:782–83; Bühler-Niederberger 2010:374). But this image was also seen

as means to justify the shift towards more investment-oriented policies focusing on "prevention" and young children (Meuth et al. 2014:84; Riedel and Klinkhammer 2018). Here, investing in the child follows the mantra of the child as "future of the nation" supported by a portrayal of parents as eager to foster the child's development (Betz and Bischoff 2018:63). The child is still perceived as object, less because it is vulnerable but because it provides future-oriented raw-material (Betz et al. 2020:12).

The "normative pattern" *("normatives Muster")* of "sheltered childhood" ("*behütete Kindheit*") captures the essence of children's societal position in Germany (Bühler-Niederberger 2020:16; Betz et al. 2020:37). Parents are protagonists in this set-up (Betz and Bischoff 2018:61), organising, what is almost reminiscent of a romanticised, educational "space" (Baader 2016:140).

Given the predominant role of parents as both protecting the vulnerable child and fostering the child's development, the love-sphere, encompassing the dependent child, captures best Germany's child approach.

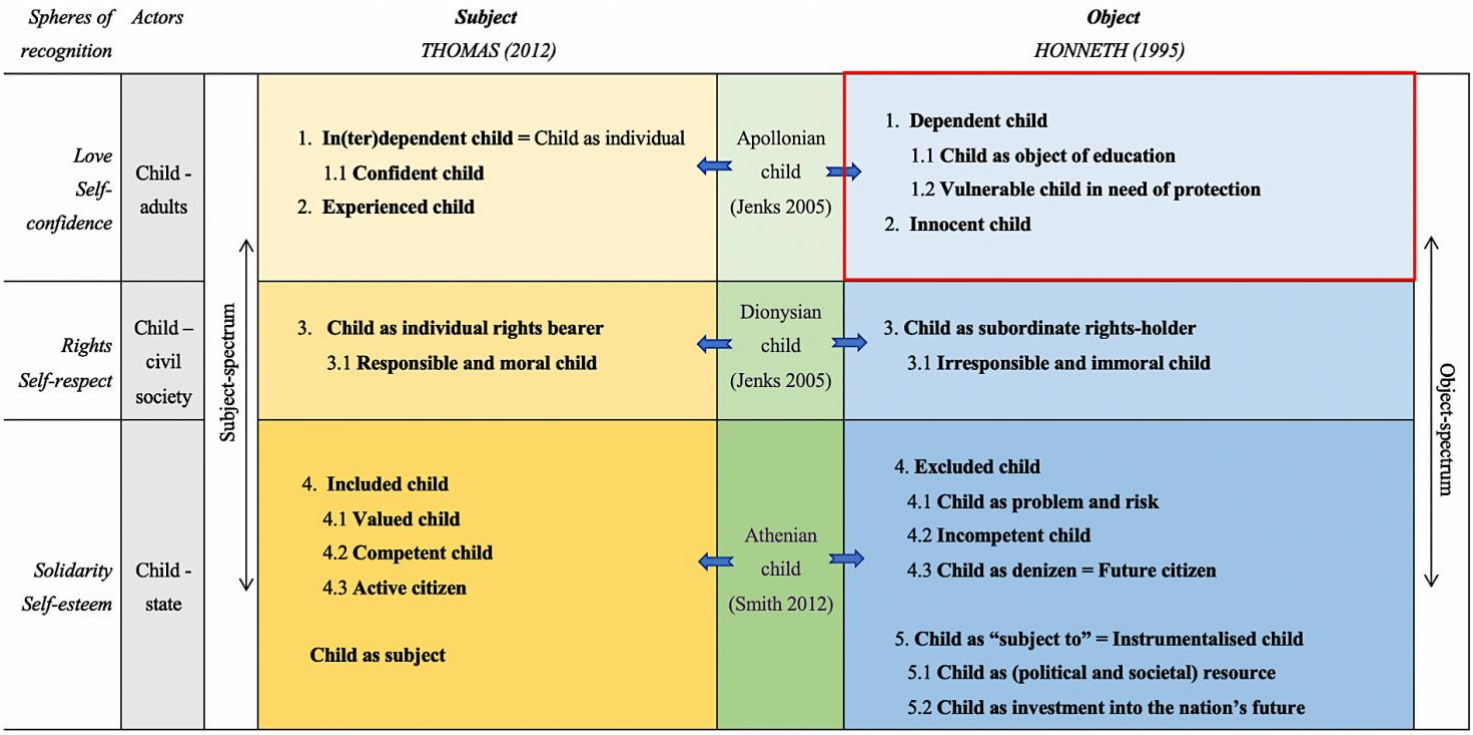

Figure 7: Germany's National Child Approach: Object-Love Matrix-Sphere (Child–Family)

7.2.2 Presidency Child Images

The German Family Ministry's Presidency-guideline *"[Damit] es jedes Kind packt"*, meaning that every child should "make it" (GE-GI-SPA-201124-1:10) outlines the dependency-oriented image of vulnerability that constituted the *basso continuo* of Germany's Presidency child approach (figure 8).

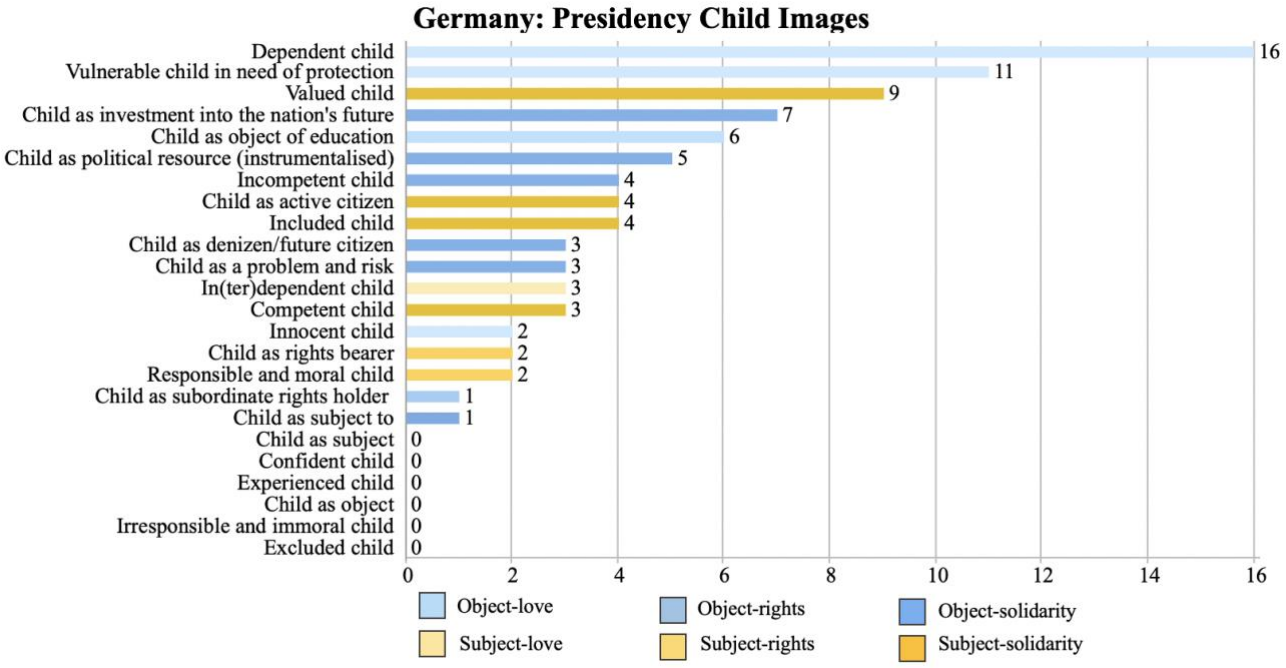

Figure 8: Frequency of Child Images in German Presidency

7.2.2.1 Dependent Child: Vulnerable Child in Need of Protection (Object-Love Sphere)

Franziska Giffey, then Federal Minister for Family Affairs and Youth, provided a prototypical example for a vulnerable child image at the 13th Forum on the Rights of the Child, stating that children belong to those "vulnerable societal groups most in need of protection" ("*Kinder gehören zu den schwächsten, den schutzbedürftigsten Gruppen unserer Gesellschaft*") (GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-200929-1:3).

In her Presidency-opening-speech at the EP, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasised the vulnerability of children (the "future of Europe") in the COVID-crisis (GE-ME-SPA-200708-1:6). Similarly, Germany's Presidency-programme portrayed children as "particularly" vulnerable (GE-PP-200701-1:12-13). Echoing this, Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas

highlighted protection rights, not participation rights, as the CRC's main achievement in a message for the International Children's Day (GE-MA-SPA-(VM)-201120-1:4).

Vulnerability also stood at the centre of the Presidency-conference "Overcoming COVID-19 – Jointly Developing Prospects for Strong Families", which preceded the EPSCO-Council's Joint Declaration "Overcoming Poverty and Social Exclusion – Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on families – Working Together to Develop Prospects for Strong Children" (GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-201218-1). Although the declaration-title focused on "strong children" instead of "strong families", Giffey re-emphasised the importance of safeguarding the family-unit when presenting the declaration at an informal EPSCO-videoconference on December 3, 2019 (GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201203-1:4). At both the above-mentioned Conference (GE-GI-SPA-201124-1:10) and informal EPSCO (GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201203-1:6), Giffey highlighted that regardless of family background, every child should be able to make its way. But at the same time, this portrayal presupposes that to develop, children depend on support, if not from the family, then from the state, a view confirmed by Merkel (GE-ME-SPA-200708-1:6).

Through the image of sheltered space, reminiscent of Germany's national child approach, children's dependent status was combined with fostering children's potential: Both in the "Earth Speakr"-initiative[11] and the EU Youth Conference, the need for a dedicated space for young people's participation was emphasised. In a safe environment, young people can, in Giffey's words, "have a crack at things" (GE-GI-SPA-201002-1:5). Following the EU-Youth-Dialogue-topic, "Space for Democracy and Participation", chosen by Germany's Trio-Presidency, Giffey posited that adults ("we") must "provide this space needed" (GE-GI-SPA-201002-1:4) - a sheltered environment where young people can learn democracy. This, in turn, is a duty for each generation, as Giffey reinforced in the EYCS-session of November 30, 2019 (GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201130-1:2). As confirmed by the EYCS-Council *Conclusions on Fostering Democratic Awareness and Democratic Engagement among Young People in Europe*, young people are valued in the confines of participation-spaces, with their democratic ideas providing "inspiration" rather than decision-making-material (GE-CC-201120-1:4).

Though established to empower children, the "Earth Speakr"-project mirrored this dependency-logic in promoting adult-coordinated child empowerment: Maas presented the "Earth Speakr"

[11] The "Earth Speakr" was the centrepiece of Germany's cultural Presidency-programme. It is an artwork, created as phone-application by Ólafur Elíasson for children to record political messages (GE-MA-SPA-(PR)-200330-1).

as a "digital space" (GE-MA-SPA-(PR)-200330-1:1), while Federal President Steinmeier's saw it as an "amplifier" (*"Verstärker"*) and "megaphone" (*"Sprachrohr"*) for children's voices (GE-ST-SPA-(PR)-201116-1:2). In this interpretation, children are executors rather than spokespersons themselves.

7.2.2.2 Included child: Valued child (Subject-Solidarity-Sphere)

Giffey illustrated at the 13th European Child Rights Forum (GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-200929-1:3) that, in a protective-emotional understanding, value did not need to depend on societal achievements but could emerge from love-based appraisal. In this value-oriented child-understanding, the notion of "space" arises in another light as "shared" space of encounter between generations, through which the included child becomes a community member: For Maas, the "Earth Speakr" provided a possibility "to carry the young voices of Europe right to the heart of our community" (GE-MA-AR-20-1:9). As such, it welcomed children into "a shared cultural and social space for exchange" aiming to "strengthen the European public sphere" (GE-MA-AR-20-1:9). Michelle Müntefering, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, confirmed this notion of inclusive "space for a European public sphere" created by the "Earth Speakr" at the EP Committee on Culture and Education (GE-MÜ-SPA-200901-1:3).

7.2.2.3 Child as Investment into the Nation's Future (Object-Solidarity-Sphere)

Another aspect highlighted was that children themselves, not only young people, portrayed as future workforce in Germany's Presidency-programme (GE-PP-200701-1:15), could have an (economic) value for society. In Maas' comments on the "Earth Speakr", children's creative ideas, filtered through the "Earth Speakr", were portrayed as being "useful" (*"von Nutzen"*) to the people of Europe (GE-MA-SPA-(AR)-201108-1:2). As Giffey highlighted at the informal EPSCO, investing in children can also help reducing child poverty (GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201203-1:5) – an argument echoing social-investment logics.

The difference between children as valued investment and the valuing of children as included community members transpired from Steinmeier's statement on the "Earth Speakr" portraying young people as valued owners of a brighter future (*"der Jugend gehört die Zukunft"*) (GE-ST-SPA-(PR)-201116-1:2). Similarly, Maas emphasised that adults should "seriously engage with their [the children's] desires, criticism and visions for a just future that is worth living in" (GE-

MA-AR-20-1:9) – because "valued children" are not just a future-value but, in Merkel's words, deserve "an economy which will safeguard and strengthen key life resources and Europe's competitiveness for future generations" (GE-ME-SPA-200708-1:7).

Overall, "sheltered childhood" characterises best Germany's Presidency child-representation. Images of the dependent and vulnerable child dominated Germany's focus on children, ranging from protective figurations to seemingly subject-granting moments (figure 9).

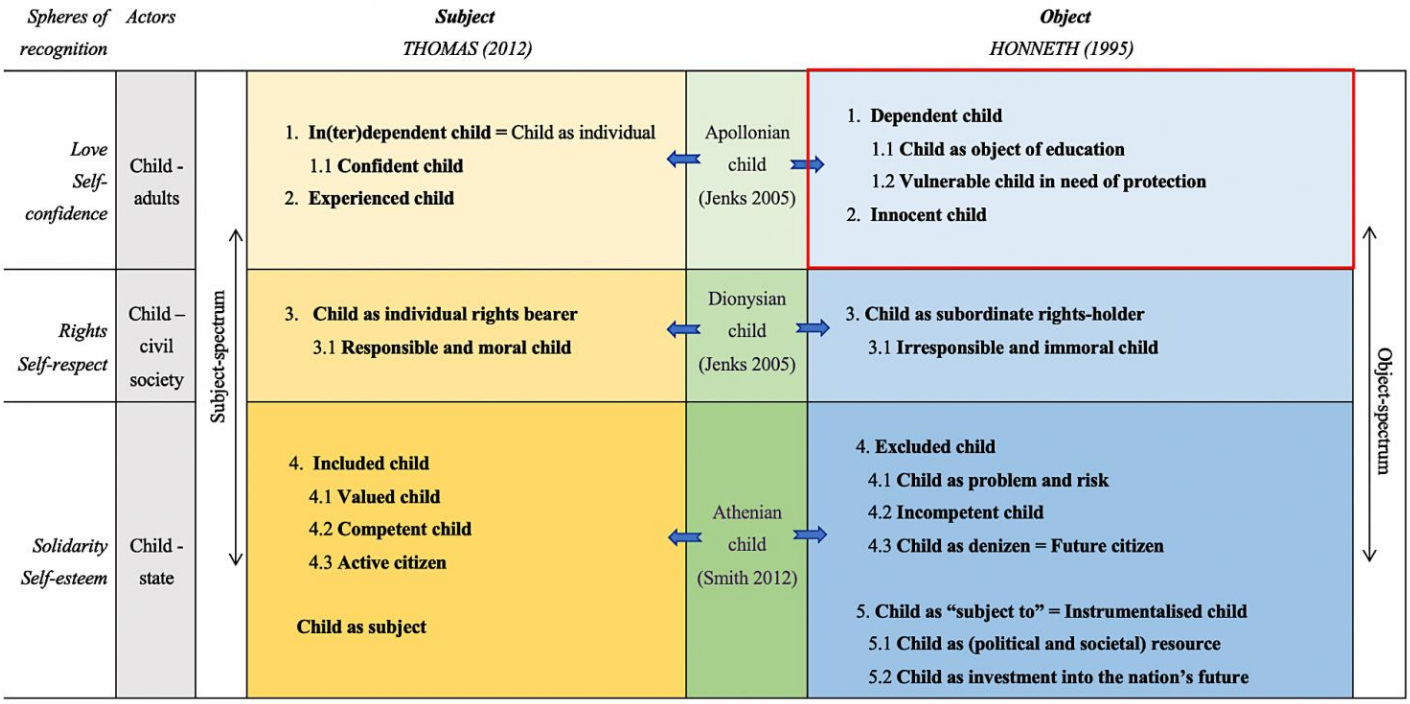

Figure 9: Germany's Presidency Child Approach: Object-Love Matrix-Sphere (Child–Family)

7.3 Finland

7.3.1 National Child Approach

Finland's childhood image traditionally inscribed itself into the "Nordic childhoods" defined by "child-centeredness and the Nordic welfare state" (Einarsdottir and Wagner 2006:38). The Finnish "agrarian legacy", the important role played historically by children in agrarian society, had shaped the perception of children as competent resources (Strandell 2010:172; Bühler-Niederberger 2010:375), and investment for the nation's future. The Nordic welfare state emerged in this climate of equality and individuality principles and pioneering child-legislation (Strandell 2010:171–72; Nylund 2019:6).

These principles figure in chapter 2, section 6(3) of the Constitution of Finland (731/1999): "Children shall be treated equally and as individuals and they shall be allowed to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development". In portraying children as subjects with only one substantive reference (besides the right to education), Finland's "child-centred" Constitution (O'Mahony 2019:423) reflects the Nordic tradition of societal "egalitarianism", taking the inclusion of children as granted (Haugli and Nylund 2019:396).

But Finland's limited constitutional reference to children can also be interpreted differently. It was introduced in 1995 together with a new bill of rights, and integrated into the 1999 Constitution (Nylund 2019:9) at a time of societal and economic change: In 1991, Finland's ratification of the CRC was perceived as momentum for "a heightened public awareness of the social position of children" (Strandell, Alanen, and Sauli 2004:203). But parallelly, an economic recession hit Finland, challenging the universalistic welfare state politics and its underlying values: While the crisis slowly faded away towards the decade's ending, it left a more economic understanding of welfare political goals, reinforced by Finland's EU-accession in 1995 (Strandell 2010:172–73; Strandell et al. 2004:147) and the subsequent financial crisis (Nyby et al. 2018).

Beyond welfare politics, this shift also affected children's role in Finnish society. Strandell (2010:175) argued that "National traditions and understandings of child competence are gradually becoming outmoded […] in favour of a more adult-controlled and regulated childhood"- a development best illustrated by the changing connotation of "child-centredness" towards an economic rationale: In the recession and crisis discourse this started with a portrayal of children as risks and problems (Harrikari 2013) or as "victims" and "lone child" (Strandell et al. 2004:203) so that political social-investment logics appeared as remedy turning the child into an object of societal and economic development. This, in turn, provided "a compelling reason to question how far their [children's] participation and provision are taken into consideration" (Harrikari 2013:70).

More recent developments illustrate increasing legislative protection of children's participation rights. The Finnish *Child Welfare Act* (417/2007) contains explicit child participation provisions in section 5, and Finland's *Youth Act* (111/2016) fosters young people's participation. Moreover, participation rights figure in other general provisions but also "special

acts" (Suurpää and Männistö 2020:6). Finland even proposed a National Strategy for Children, under which children can help reform the *Child Welfare Act* (Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2021).

Overall, while Finland's historical child image reflecting egalitarianism was the competent child, newer logics of risk construct the child as problem or investment. To represent this tensional gap, Finland's national child approach is split between the object- and subject-solidarity-sphere.

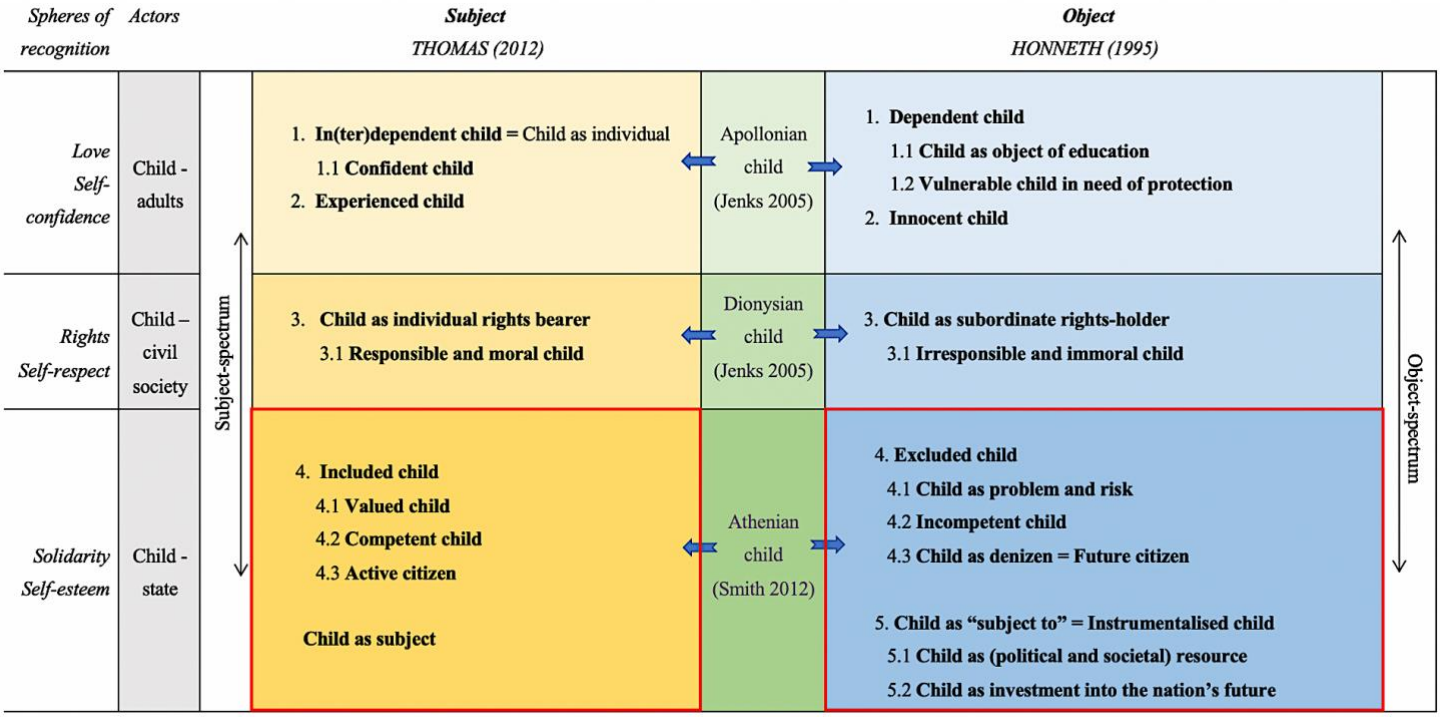

Figure 10: Finland's National Child Approach(es): Object-/Subject-Solidarity Matrix-Sphere (Child-State)

7.3.2 Presidency Child Images

In Finland's Presidency, children remained largely in the shadow of political initiatives such as the "Economy of Wellbeing", providing a paradigm-shift from economic performance to wellbeing and the backdrop for investing in children (FI-PP-190626-1:7-8). This approach was presented in then Prime Minister Rinne's speech at the "Tripartite Social Summit" (FI-RI-SPA-191016-1) and mirrored in the Presidency-focus on youth work, described in the literature as unmeaningful child participation (Percy-Smith 2018:166).

Overall, images of the child as investment and resource dominated in Finland's Presidency (figure 11).

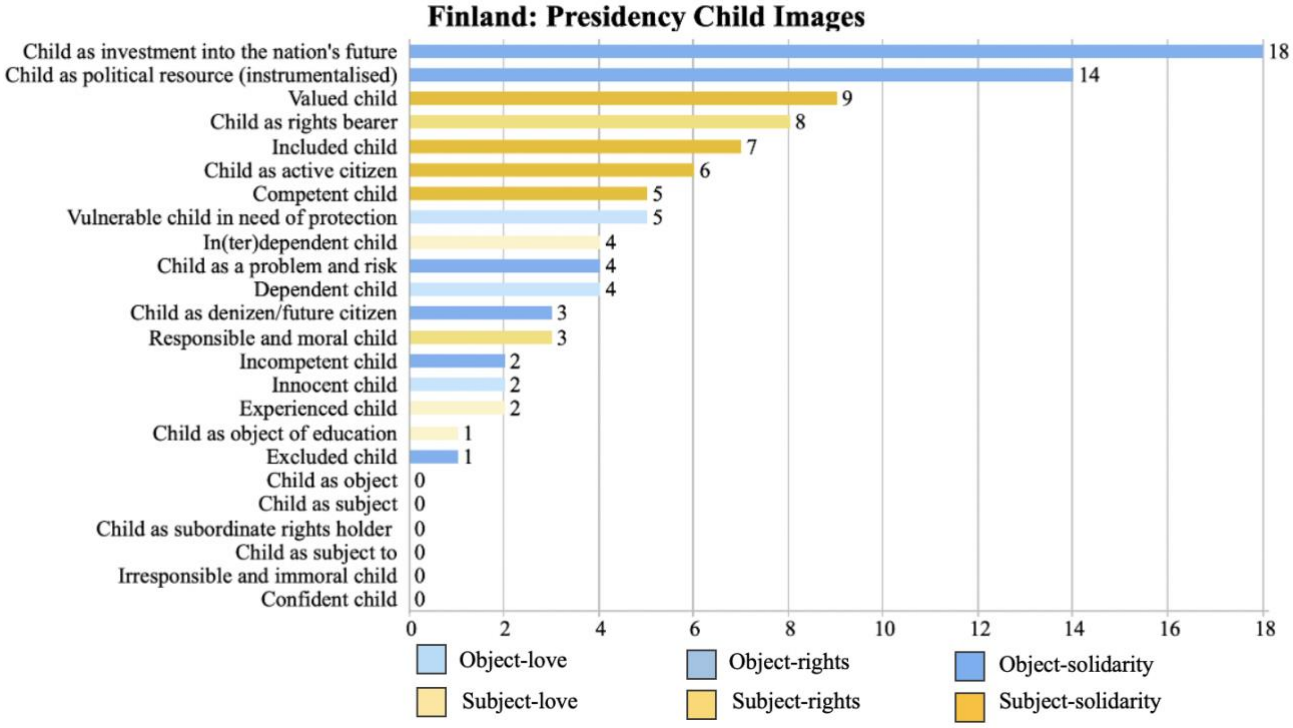

Figure 11: Frequency of Child Images in Finnish Presidency

7.3.2.1 *Child as Investment into the Nation's Future and Child as Political Resource (Object-Solidarity-Sphere)*

The speech that Tytti Tuppurainen, Minister for European Affairs, held at the EP for the 30th anniversary of the CRC summarised Finland's Presidency-approach to children: "investing in children throughout their journey to adulthood is not only a moral duty but also an essential investment in a better future for all humanity" (FI-TU-SPA-191113-1:26). This investment-orientation also appeared in discussions around youth work: At the EYCS-press-conference, Hanna Kosonen, then Minister of Science and Culture, emphasised that "we cannot afford" to lose young people's "confidence in decision-making" and thus "[i]nvesting in our youth is investing in our future" (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:7-8). This was mirrored in the Presidency-programme stating that "Europe cannot afford to waste any of its human capital. This is why the social inclusion of young people needs special attention" (FI-PP-190626-1:8). The solution for preventing the loss of young people's (economic) value is presented here as societal inclusion of young people. The same ambiguity between young people as (economic) value versus full community members appeared in Tuppurainen's EP-speech: "If their full potential is realised, they can be the greatest agents of change and sustainable development in their communities" (FI-TU-SPA-191113-1:21). Here, children's participation in the

community is framed as an investment, not an entitlement, and children as resources for a progress-oriented future.

Parallelly, the image of the child as resource transpired in the tokenistic involvement of young people. Like the Romanian Presidency's invitation of the Junior Ambassadors, the invitation of Sara Nymann, vice-president of the Finnish National Youth Council Alliance, to the EYCS sent paradoxical signals: Inviting but only letting young people briefly testify confirmed rather than changed their subordinate status as nation's future. Most clearly this transpired in Kosonen thanking Nymann, the "young guest" for "her very refreshing ideas" (FI-KO-SPA-(CS)-191122-1:10; 22). At the EYCS-press-conference, Kosonen praised "young Greta Thunberg doing a great job raising awareness" (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:8) – promoting a belittling and thus excluding child image.

The resource-orientation was further fortified by Annika Saarikko, then Minister of Science and Culture[12] at the EU Youth Conference: "Young people are a key resource for creating a socially fair and equal Europe" (FI-SA-SPA-190701-1:1) – an image turning child responsibility into potential for societal future.

7.3.2.2 Included Child: Valued Child (Subject-Solidarity-Sphere)

As both the images of the child as investment and of the valued child have a future-oriented dimension, they can seem interchangeable. However, as emblematic examples for the valued child, Tuppurainen's statements at the "Conference on the Interaction between Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights" illustrated the small but significant difference: "As our Presidency motto puts it: 'Sustainable Europe – Sustainable Future'. This is the kind of 'ode to joy' that we want to leave for future generations" (FI-TU-SPA-190911-1:3). Further, she emphasised that "Young people have the right to grow up in a society based firmly on strong and indivisible values" (FI-TU-SPA-190911-1:2). At the same conference, Anna-Maja Henriksson, Finland's Minister of Justice, called it "our duty to continue to strive for a socially, ecologically and economically sound Europe for our future generations" (FI-HE-SPA-190911-1:1). The question here is what Finland can do together with and for its (valued) young people and not the other way around. Kosonen (FI-KO-SPA-(VM)-191119-1:2) and Rinne (FI-RI-SPA-191205-1:1) defended similar positions.

[12] Kosonen replaced Saarikko as Minister later during the Presidency.

Regarding the included child, Saarikko presented youth work as tool to "help young people mature, become more independent, feel they belong to the community, and acquire the skills and knowledge needed in society" (FI-SA-SPA-190701-1:2). This statement is emblematic for the subject-solidarity matrix-sphere because it recognizes young people as community members based on their societal contribution. Mirroring the egalitarianism of Finland's Constitution, Saarikko emphasised that "[i]t is extremely important that young people experience mutual equality" (FI-SA-SPA-190701-1:2). Similarly, Henriksson posited that "Equality is the glue that holds our societies together" (FI-HE-SPA-190911-1:2).

Quoting an unidentified poem in front of the EP, Tuppurainen made the clearest reference of all Presidency speeches, to the child as actively included 'being': "To [a child] we cannot say 'tomorrow', his name is 'Today'" (FI-TU-SPA-191113-1:30). But paradoxically, using the same metaphor, Tuppurainen resolved to a more problem-oriented child portrayal in the national Presidency-setting of the "Europe Forum" in Turku: "In Cabaret there is a memorable, creepy scene where a young boy wearing the swastika inspires people with his song: 'Tomorrow belongs to me.'" (FI-TU-SPA-190830-1:3). Choosing a child-figure in a national speech-setting to illustrate the threat by nationalistic tendencies questions the authenticity of Tuppurainen's portrayal of children as valuable trailblazers in other Presidency speeches.

Overall, Finland's Presidency portrayed (i) youth work as synonymous to participation and (ii) reserved participation mostly for young people. Children were presented predominantly as objects in a metaphorical or investment-oriented way. As such, Finland's Presidency child approach is attributed to the object-solidarity-sphere (figure 12).

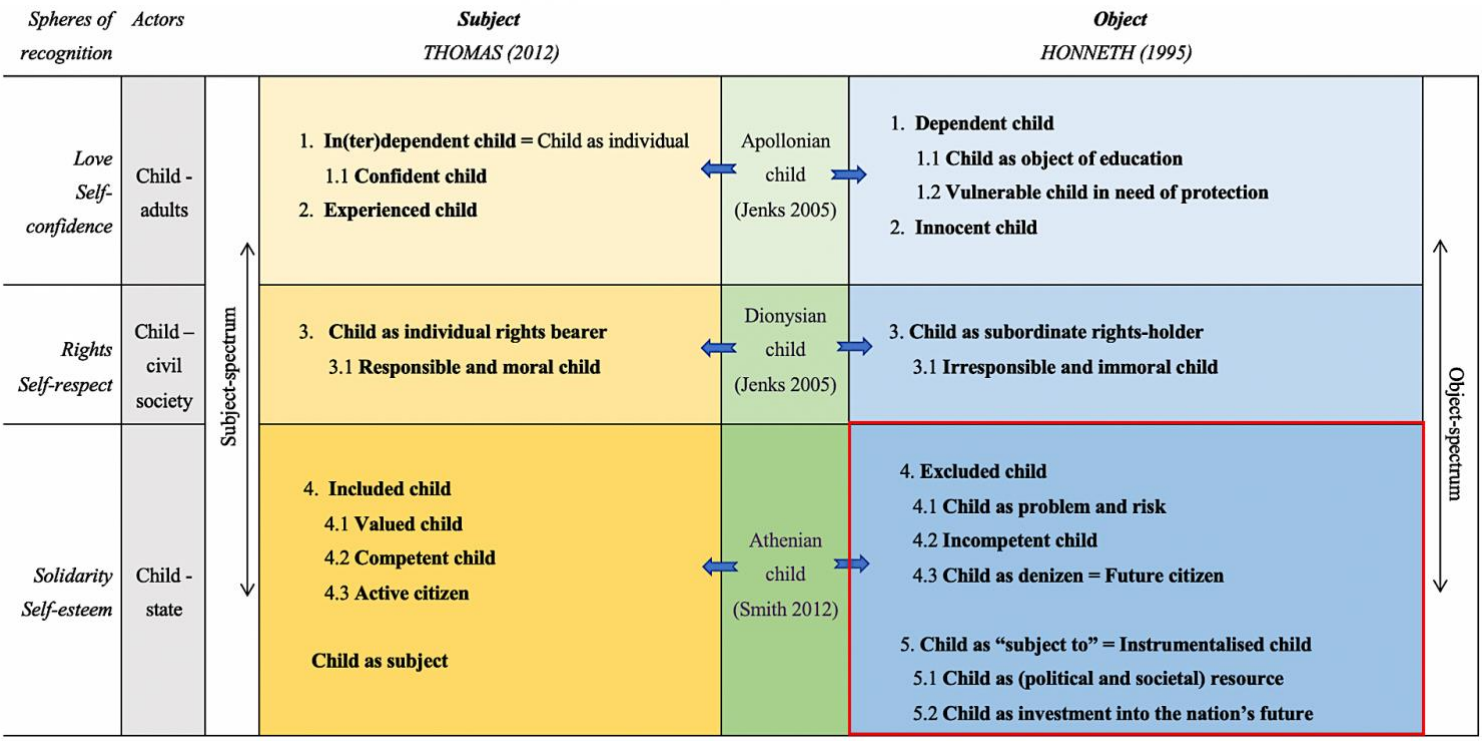

Figure 12: Finland's Presidency Child Approach: Object-Solidarity Matrix-Sphere (Child–State)

7.4 Children or Young People? Attributional Precisions for All Presidencies

During the document analysis it appeared that the underlying definitions of child images diverged depending on the sphere they pertained to. Attributing all coded segments to the additional categories, "youth", "young people" and "children" (figure 13) showed that images in the solidarity-sphere coincided more often with the designation "young people" (e.g., 30 overlaps for investment and 28 for resource) than "children" (e.g., 10 overlaps for investment and 14 for resource). This pattern was mirrored across the Presidencies. Overall, the designation "young people" was more readily employed than "children" and "youth".

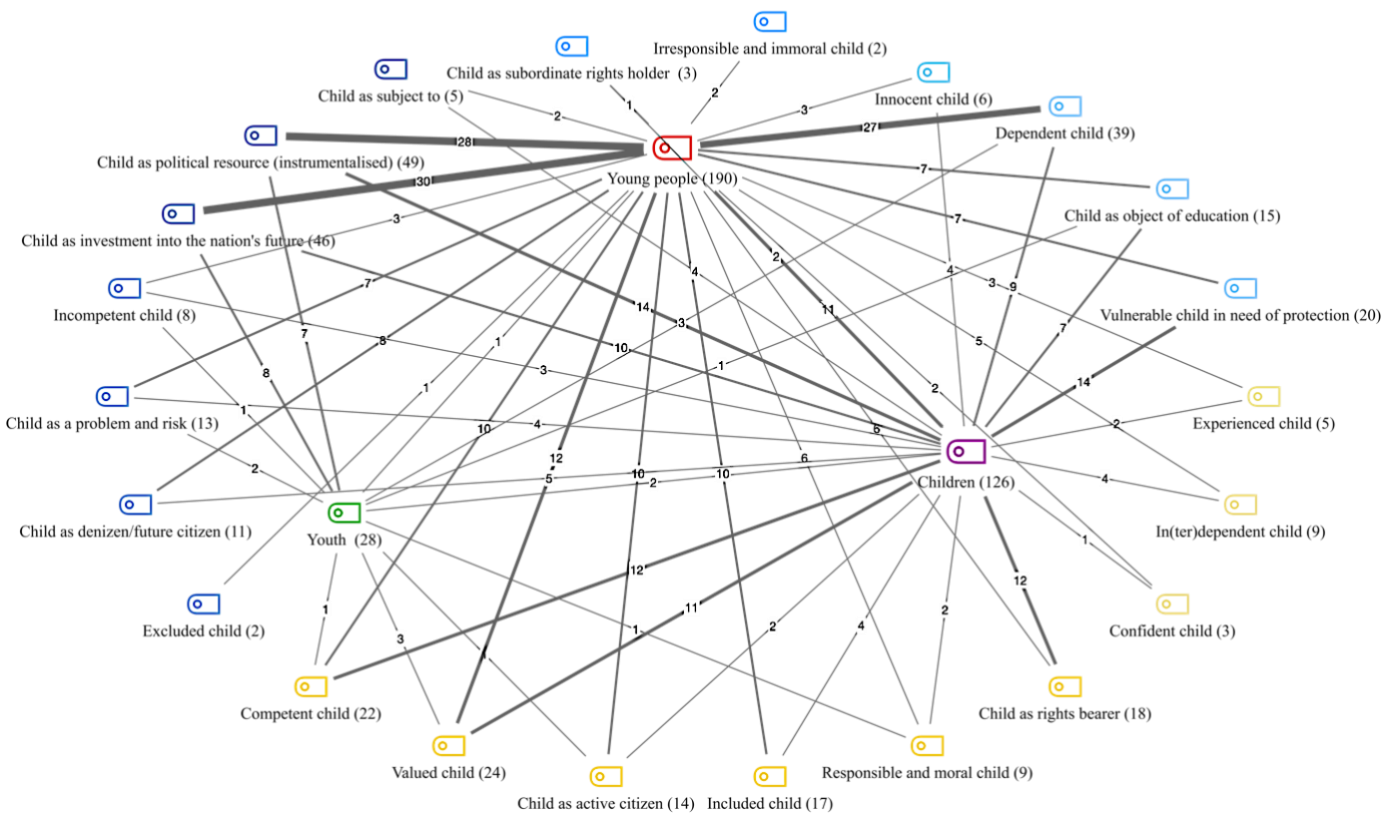

Figure 13: Overlap of Codes (Children/Youth/Young People with Child Images) in All Presidencies

8. Concluding Discussion and Results

8.1 Vertical and Horizontal Assessments

In summary, the analysis showed that Romania's Presidency child images are authentic when benchmarked against the national approach, as they follow the logic of the child as object in the solidarity-sphere. In emphasising children's value for Romania, the relation between state and child appeared more present than between child and family. Germany's Presidency child approach reflects the dependency-oriented notion of "sheltered childhood" of the national approach, where the family fundamentally shapes the child's societal place. As both of Germany's approaches figure in the matrix-recognition-sphere of object-sided love, the Presidency-approach is judged authentic. Finland's ambivalent national relationship to children, as traditionally competent subjects versus investment-targets and problems, was reflected at the Presidency-level but overall outweighed by the object-images.

A vertical and horizontal comparison of all Presidency child images confirms the predominance of the image of the child as object (table 1). The Presidency child images are:

(i) unmeaningful compared to the ideal child image (child as subject);

(ii) authentic, because they echo the national child approach. For Finland, the Presidency-images intensified the object-solidarity tendency of the national child approach;

(iii) compatible across countries, as they are all image-nuances of the child as object. The compatibility of the Romanian and Finnish Presidencies should not be mistaken for indicating identical child understandings. Rather, it must be noted that the object-solidarity matrix-sphere contained more images, which increased its chances to capture child approaches. Moreover, this confirms the multifaceted character of child images in countries (Kjørholt 2002:66), mediated here by the nuances of the child as object, and the harmonizing power of Presidency-settings.

	Romania	Germany	Finland	
Matrix sphere National level	Object-solidarity	Object-love	Object-solidarity	Subject-solidarity
Matrix sphere EU-Presidency	Object-solidarity	Object-love	Object-solidarity	

Table 1: Comparison of Matrix-Spheres across Levels (National and Presidency) and Countries

8.2 Limits and Quality Standards

Although children's perspectives were considered for defining the child as subject (section 2.2), the research-focus on adult perspectives did not leave much space for children's contributions. This could be remedied by further research.

Moreover, although the countries were chosen as to illustrate the EU's diversity, looking only at three countries can provide a preliminary overview but not accurately represent the positions of other Member States and their Presidencies (Stake 1994:245), which limits the results' "external standards of quality", the qualitative pendant to external validity (Kuckartz 2014:154–

55). Applying the analysis to all EU countries could increase the representativeness and provide further evidence for the suitability of the present approach.

Concerns related to reductionism (section 5.4.1) highlighted that the results provide a specific angle on the prospect of child participation policy. Though speaker-backgrounds and arena-factors were made explicit (Appendix A), concerns remain regarding the "real" intentions behind child images, referred to here as author-credibility. The Presidency-setting reinforced the specific nature of this angle. Moreover, focusing on past Presidencies means that government(-compositions) have changed since. This in turn might affect how children would be portrayed in Presidencies today. However, given the comprehensibility of the tool of child images and the choice of a varied, representative but limited number of speakers, it seems that child images in speeches reflect an overview of child approaches within their country that bears some degree of perduring validity and could be investigated by future research.

Table 2 summarises how the research project fared regarding "credibility" and "authenticity", coinciding as "quality control criteria" for document choice (Scott 1990:19–31), as "internal standards of quality" (Kuckartz 2014:153–54) and as assessment for child images.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Child Images</th><th>Documents (and Speeches)
(Scott 1990:19–31)</th><th>Method
"Thematic Qualitative Text Analysis"
(Kuckartz 2014:153–54)</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Authenticity
(of images, documents; authenticity achieved through method implementation …)</td><td rowspan="2">Similarity with national child approach ✓</td><td>Identification of "authorship" ✓</td><td rowspan="2">Authenticity achieved through transcription; appropriateness of method choice ✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>"Genuineness" of the document ✓</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Credibility
(of author, speaker; credibility achieved through method implementation…)</td><td rowspan="2">Transparency regarding speaker characteristics (e.g., party affiliation, government-official/minister) ✓</td><td>Establishing level of content-distortion: "Sincerity" and "Accuracy" (✓)</td><td rowspan="2">Consistency of coding and coherence, precision, structure of category system to create best conditions for assessing credibility of material ✓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Consideration of context conditions of document production ✓</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2: Internal quality check (criteria: credibility and authenticity) for method, research project and data choice (Kuckartz 2014:153–54; Scott 1990:19–31)

8.3 Implications and Inspiration for Research and Policy

Inspecting the deepest level of policy-conception provides a hesitant outlook on the prospect of meaningful child participation policy which should not be essentialising but might inspire research into the limited achievements of child participation in EU Member States.

Finding 1: Given the predominance of the object-image (figure 14), it seems that the challenge will consist less in finding agreement across Member States than in realising meaningful child participation policy that closes the gap between legislation and reality, and that reflects an understanding of children as subjects. Adult attitudes referring to climate activist Greta Thunberg in an almost condescending way were identified especially around the Romanian (RO-MA-SPA-(CS)-190522-1:5) and Finnish EYCS-Councils (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:8). This confirms findings from EU reports that adults making jokes about Thunberg's activism made children feel "belittled or even insulted by adults because of being active" (Janta et al. 2021:70). Protective adult attitudes constituted another barrier, confirming previous findings (Day et al. 2015:140–41).

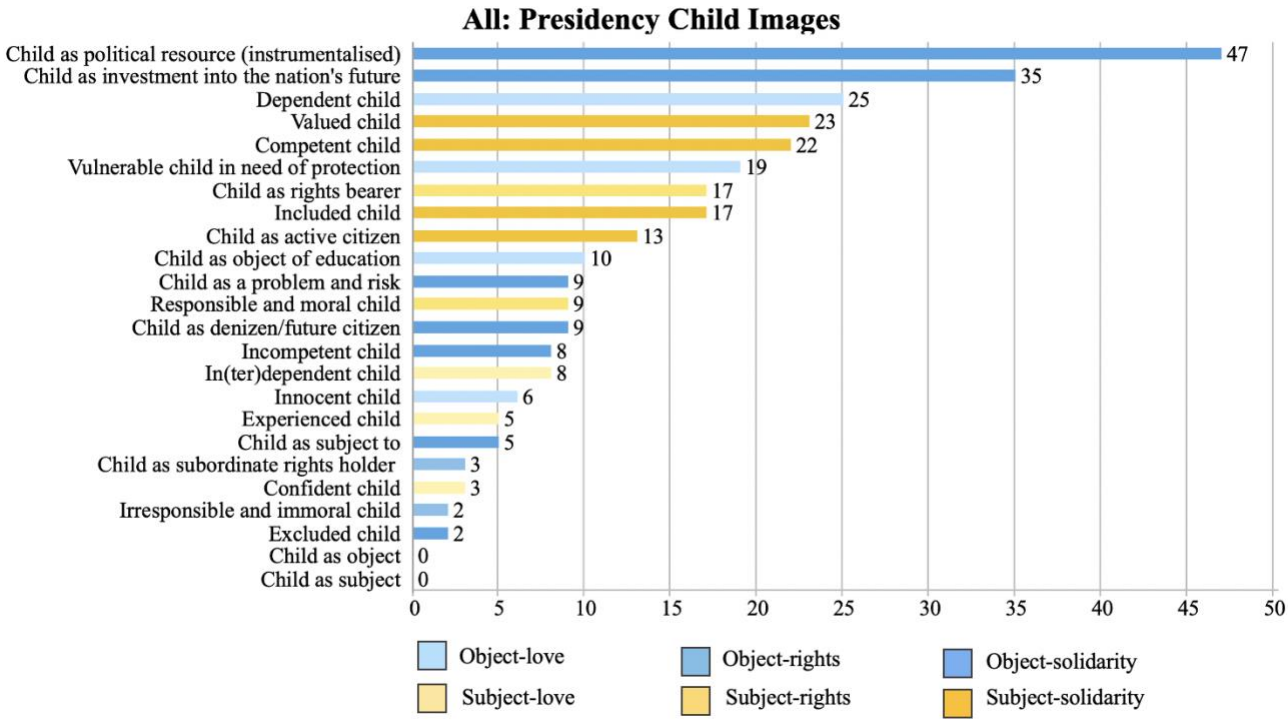

Figure 14: Frequency of Child Images in All Presidencies

Finding 2: Presidency child images in speeches are embellished but surprisingly authentic compared to national images when using a fine-tuned matrix to identify different degrees of

child images. A concrete avenue to pursue for future research could be *why* government officials put forward a certain child image (author-credibility).

Finding 3: The pattern of child-centredness for social investment emerged with differing intensity across Presidencies. This pattern, identified in European welfare states (Betz et al. 2020:12–13; Hemerijck 2018) risks, as this thesis aimed to show, promoting object- rather than subject-oriented child images as it provides a progress - rather than child-oriented understanding of child-centredness (Daly 2020; Kjørholt 2013; Strandell 2010).

Future research could investigate *why* child image(s) presented by diverse EU countries end up being so convergent.

Finding 4: Another preliminary finding is that the blanket appellation "young people" was used more often than "children" and "youth" and linked more to the solidarity-recognition-sphere.

While the present data does not allow for definitive statements, future research could analyse whether this is a coincidence or general pattern and what this tells about participation opportunities for younger versus older children.

8.4 Outlook

The findings illustrate the need to monitor developments under the Commission's *EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child* promising to establish an EU Children's Participation Platform (European Commission 2021b:3–4). Moreover, Council Conclusions on the Strategy, that could materialise under the upcoming Slovenian Presidency (Council of the European Union 2016), will provide more information on Member-State-attitudes toward child participation. However, as this thesis showed, both Commission initiatives and Member State agreement to more meaningful child participation should be seen only as a component of the question of the prospect of meaningful policy that makes a difference for children's societal recognition.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: List of Documents

1. Further Information on Document Identification

All documents and speeches can be found in the separate MAXQDA-file.

Document-Identifier: In order to identify the documents in the below analysis, they were numbered according to the same scheme: Country Prefix – Speaker Prefix – Document Type – Date (Year-Month-Day) – Number:Paragraph/Page:Position of characters. For pdf-documents the reference refers to page-numbers, for transcribed documents in word, to paragraphs. Speaker Prefixes were added only for speeches.

Abbreviations for Document Identifiers (except Speaker Prefixes):

AR	Article
CC	Council Conclusions
CS	Council Session
DS	Doorstep
FI	Finland
GE	Germany
PC	Press Conference
PDP	Presidency-Discussion-Paper
PP	Presidency-Programme
PR	Press Release
RO	Romania
SPA	Speech Act
VM	Video Message

2. Speech Acts[13]

Document identifier	Country	Title	Author	Party Affiliation	Type of Document	URL (Links to Video or Text)	Last Accessed	Details[14]	Date	Arena	Target Audience[15]	Main target group[16]
RO-BI-SPA-190328-1	Romania	Vice Prime Minister Ana Birchall, Speech at the EU Youth Conference in Bucharest	Ana Birchall (Deputy Prime Minister of Romania, Minister for the Implementation of Strategic Partnerships of Romania [17])	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/0uLfHRihEPA?t=80 Speech at 00:01:24 – 00:09:34	21.06.2021	Transcribed in Romanian and translated into English for MAXQDA analysis [18]	28.03.2019	EU Youth Conference in Bucharest; in presence of a Commissioner	Youth	Youth
RO-BI-SPA-(PR)-190506-1	Romania	Ana Birchall, message from the Romanian Government: Children must play a key role in building the future of the European Union	Ana Birchall (Deputy Prime Minister of Romania, Minister for the Implementation of Strategic Partnerships of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act in Press Release	https://gov.ro/ro/media/comunicate/ana-birchall-mesaj-din-partea-guvernului-romaniei-copiii-trebuie-sa-joace-un-rol-esential-in-construirea-viitorului-uniunii-europene	21.06.2021	Translated from Romanian into English for MAXQDA analysis [19]	06.05.2019	EU-Presidency Conference in Bucharest; in presence of children; mediatized at EU-level	Children/ Adults	Children
RO-MA-SPA-190328-1	Romania	Speech by Constantin-Bogdan Matei at the EU Youth Conference in Bucharest	Constantin-Bogdan Matei, (Minister of Youth and Sports of Romania[20])	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/0uLfHRihEPA?t=1317 Speech at 00:21:57 – 00:28:40	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	28.03.2019	EU Youth Conference in Bucharest; in presence of a Commissioner	Youth	Youth
RO-MA-SPA-(CS)-190522-1	Romania	EYCS Romania Youth on May 22, 2019, Romania	Constantin-Bogdan Matei, (Minister of Youth and Sports of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act: Transcript EYCS 22.05.2019	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23561?start_time=0 Several speech interventions during EYCS: most relevant at 08:45:10 - 08:48:35 10:41:16 - 10:41:37	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	EYCS-Session (Youth); Youth Ministers and two children (one Junior Ambassador and one Youth Delegate)	Adults	Children/ Young people

[13] Speeches in table ordered according to (i) country (ii) speaker (iii) date.
[14] Speech Acts translated from Romanian into English were checked and approved by a Romanian native speaker. Translations are available in the separate MAXQDA-file. Transcripts are available in the separate MAXQDA-file.
[15] (Children/ Youth/ Adults) Criteria: People Addressed; Speaking/Writing style.
[16] (Children/ Young people/Adults) Criterium: People mentioned.
[17] Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for the Implementation of Strategic Partnerships of Romania (January 29, 2018 –June 7, 2019), Minister of Justice (June 7, 2019 –November 4, 2019).
[18] See footnote 14.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Minister at time of EYCS.

RO-MA-SPA-(PC)-190522-2	Romania	Press conference on May 22, 2019, Minister Constantin-Bogdan Matei	Constantin-Bogdan Matei, (Minister of Youth and Sports of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act at Press conference	https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20190522-education-youth-culture-and-sport-council-may-2019/123771-2-press-conference-education-youth-part-2-20190522	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	Press conference in presence of a Commissioner, ministers and journalists	Adults	Children/ Young people
RO-AN-SPA-(CS)-190522-3	Romania	EYCS Romania Education May 22, 2019	Ecaterina Andronescu (Minister of National Education of Romania[21])	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act: Transcript EYCS 22.05.2019	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23563?start_time=0 Several speech interventions during EYCS: most relevant at 13:54:16 - 13:56:23 15:40:39 - 15:41:38 15:43:34 - 15:48:30	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	EYCS-Session (Education); Youth Ministers and one Junior Ambassador	Adults	Children/ Young people
RO-AN-SPA-(PC)-190522-4	Romania	Press conference on May 22, 2019, Minister Ecaterina Andronescu	Ecaterina Andronescu (Minister of National Education of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act at Press conference	https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20190522-education-youth-culture-and-sport-council-may-2019/123771-1-press-conference-education-youth-part-1-20190522	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	Press conference in presence of a Commissioner, ministers and journalists	Adults	Children/ Young people
RO-CO-SPA-190402-1	Romania	Speech at the 12th Forum on the Rights of the Child	Gabriela Coman (President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, annexed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice of Romania[22])	/	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/CtqO5kpGXkY?t=5407 Speech at 01:30:08 – 01:41:44	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	02.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children/ Adults	Children
RO-CO-SPA-190403-1	Romania	Comment at the 12th Forum on the Rights of the Child	Gabriela Coman (President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, annexed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice of Romania)	/	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/_F9TmcPuqOk?t=4374 Comment at 01:12:55 – 01:14:38	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	03.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children/ Adults	Children

[21] Minister at time of EYCS.
[22] President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption during the Romanian Presidency.

RO-SPA-(PR)-190306-1	Romania	Press-Release: Promoting consultation and participation of children, a priority of Romania in the context of holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union	Ministry of Labour and Social Justice; Statements by Marius-Constantin Budăi, (Minister of Labour and Social Justice[23]) and Gabriela Coman (President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, annexed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Acts in Press Release	http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/5436-cp-unicef-06-03-2019	21.06.2021	Translated from Romanian into English for MAXQDA analysis [24]	06.03.2019	Bucharest; presentation conference of the four Junior Ambassadors to the European Union	Adults and Children	Children
RO-SPA-(PR)-190506-1	Romania	Press-Release: The EU Children's Conference in Bucharest will lay the foundations for children's consultation mechanisms in European Union decisions, May 6, 2019	Ministry of Labour and Social Justice; Statements by Marius-Constantin Budăi, (Minister of Labour and Social Justice), Ana Birchall (Deputy Prime Minister of Romania, Minister for the Implementation of Strategic Partnerships of Romania) and Gabriela Coman (President of the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, annexed to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Acts in Press Release	http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/5509-ro2019eu-cp-conferinta-bucuresti-copiilor-consultare-ue-06052019	21.06.2021	Romanian (translation by UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/romania/press-releases/ro2019eu-bucharest-conference-eu-children-will-lay-foundations-child-consultation)	06.05.2019	EU-Presidency Conference in Bucharest; in presence of children; mediatized at EU-level	Adults	Children
RO-BA-SPA-(PC)-190612-1	Romania	Press briefing by Government Spokesman Nelu Barbu at the end of the government meeting	Nelu Barbu (Government Spokesman[25])	/	Speech Act	https://gov.ro/ro/guvernul/sedinte-guvern/briefing-de-presa-sustinut-de-purtatorul-de-cuvant-al-guvernului-nelu-	21.06.2021	Transcribed in Romanian and translated into English for	12.06.2019	In the context of EU-Presidency; mention of Bucharest	Adults and Children	Children

[23] Minister during Romanian Presidency.
[24] See footnote 14.
[25] Government Spokesman during Romanian Presidency.

						barbu-la-finalul-sedintei-de-guvern1560348477 Statement at 00:03:05 - 00:04:00		MAXQDA analysis[26]		Children's conference		
RO-BR-SPA-(PC)-190523-1	Romania	Press conference May 23, 2019, Minister Valer-Daniel Breaz	Valer-Daniel Breaz (Minister for Culture and National Identity of Romania)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act at Press conference	https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20190522-education-youth-culture-and-sport-council-may-2019/123814-1-press-conference-culture-sport-part-1-20190523 https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20190522-education-youth-culture-and-sport-council-may-2019/123814-2-press-conference-culture-sport-part-2-20190523	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	23.05.2019	Press conference in presence of a Commissioner, ministers and journalists	Adults	Adults/ Children/ Young people
RO-DĂ-SPA-190506-1	Romania	Address by Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă at the international conference- "Children's Participation in Decision-Making and Policy-Making at EU Level"	Viorica Dăncilă (Prime Minister[27])	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act	https://gov.ro/en/news/address-by-prime-minister-viorica-dancila-at-the-international-conference-children-s-participation-in-decision-making-and-policy-making-at-eu-level	21.06.2021	English	06.05.2019	EU-Presidency Conference in Bucharest; in presence of children; mediatized at EU-level	Children	Children
RO-DĂ-SPA-(PR)-190601-1	Romania	The message of the Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă on the International Children's Day	Viorica Dăncilă (Prime Minister)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act (released as written press release)	https://gov.ro/fr/nouvelles/message-du-premier-ministre-viorica-dancila-a-l-occasion-de-la-journee-internationale-de-l-enfance-1er-juin	21.06.2021	Translated from French into English	01.06.2019	In the context of EU-Presidency; mention of Bucharest Children's conference	Children	Children
RO-DĂ-SPA-190703-1	Romania	Prime Minister Speech at the Stocktaking conference on the exercise of the Romanian EU Council Presidency	Viorica Dăncilă (Prime Minister)	Social Democratic Party of Romania (Partidului Social Democrat, PSD)	Speech Act	https://gov.ro/en/news/speech-by-prime-minister-viorica-dancila-at-the-stocktaking-conference-on-the-exercise-of-the-romanian-eu-council-presidency	21.06.2021	English	03.07.2019	Stocktaking conference on the exercise of the Romanian EU Council Presidency; National arena	Adults	Children

[26] See footnote 14.
[27] Prime Minister in office during the Romanian Presidency.

GE-ME-SPA-200708-1	Germany	Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel on the German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020 to the EP in Brussels on July 8, 2020	Dr Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany)	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU)	Speech Act	https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/speech-by-federal-chancellor-angela-merkel-on-the-german-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-eu-2020-to-the-european-parliament-in-brussels-on-8-july-2020-1768008	21.06.2021	English	08.07.2020	European Parliament; in presence of MEPs	Adults	Adults/ Children/ Young people
GE-ME-SPA-201002-1	Germany	Merkel Speech at the EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Dr Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany)	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU)	Speech Act	https://vimeo.com/463761476 Opening Speech at 00:34:16 – 00:36:10	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	02.10.2020	EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Young people	Young people
GE-ST-SPA-(PR)-201116-1	Germany	Earth Speakr am Weltkindertag: Es ist Zeit, dass die Politik der jungen Generation mehr zuhört!	Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Federal President of Germany)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act in Press Release	https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-de/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/earth-speaks-weltkindertag-aufruf/2416668	21.06.2021	German	16.11.2020	Digital communication on EU-Presidency and child participation	Adults	Children/ Young people
GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-200929-1	Germany	Giffey Video Message 13th Forum of the Rights of the Child	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth[28])	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act /Video Message	https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/13th-european-forum-rights-child-towards-eu-strategy-rights-child-2020-sep-29_en Day 1 - 29/09/2020 Message at: 10:01:54 – 10:03:34	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	29.09.2020	13th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of children, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children/ Adults	Children
GE-GI-SPA-201002-1	Germany	Giffey Opening Speech of the EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act	https://vimeo.com/463761476 Opening Speech at 00:25:59 – 00:34:12	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	02.10.2020	EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Young people	Young people
GE-GI-SPA-201005-1	Germany	Giffey Closing Speech of the EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act	https://vimeo.com/464698751 Closing Speech at 01:19:24 – 01:24:20	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	05.10.2020	EU Youth Conference in Berlin	Young people	Young people
GE-GI-SPA-201124-1	Germany	Opening Speech at the Conference "Overcoming COVID-19 – jointly	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei	Speech Act (Statement) : Transcript	https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=502445637378636&ref=watch_permalink	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	24.11.2020	EU-Presidency Conference	Adults	Children (and Families)

[28] Minister during German Presidency.

		developing prospects for strong families"	Citizens, Women and Youth)	Deutschlands, SPD)		Opening speech at: 00:04:50 – 00:18:10						
GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201130-1	Germany	Informal video conference of Youth Ministers EYCS Germany on November 30, 2020	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act: Transcript EYCS 30.11.2020	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/24248 Several speech interventions during EYCS: most relevant at 10:19:00 - 10:24:00	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	30.11.2020	(Informal video conference) EYCS-Session	Adults	Young people
GE-GI-SPA-(CS)-201203-1	Germany	Giffey Statement on Joint Declaration on Families and Children at informal video conference of employment and social policy ministers (EPSCO)	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act: Transcript EPSCO 03.12.2020	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/24239 Statement at: 16:47:00 – 16:49:00	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	03.12.2020	(Informal video conference) EPSCO-Session	Adults	Children
GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-201218-1	Germany	Giffey Video Message end of Council Presidency	Franziska Giffey (German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act /Video Message	https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/mediathek/franziska-giffey-gemeinsam-gut-aus-der-krise-kommen-163544?view=	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	18.12.2020	Video Message addressed to the public	Adults	Young people/ Youth
GE-MA-SPA-(PR)-200330-1	Germany	Kunstwerk für Deutschlands EU-Ratspräsidentschaft gibt Kindern eine Stimme: Außenminister Heiko Maas trifft Ólafur Elíasson	German Federal Foreign Office (Statement by Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act in Press Release	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/maas-olafur-eliasson/2329678#:~:text=trifft%20Olafur%20Eliasson-,Kunstwerk%20f%C3%BCr%20Deutschlands%20EU%20%2DRatspr%C3%A4sidentschaft%20gibt%20Kindern%20eine%20Stimme%3A%20Au%C3%9Fenminister,Heiko%20Maas%20trifft%20Olafur%20Eliasson&text=Au%C3%9Fenminister%20Heiko%20Maas%20sprach%20heute,f%C3%BCr%20die%20deutsche%20EU%20%2DRatspr%C3%A4sidentschaft.	21.06.2021	German	30.03.2020 (before EU-Presidency but about "Earth Speakr")	Meeting between Elíasson and Maas aimed at a German public; Digital communication on EU-Presidency and child participation	Adults	Children
GE-MA-SPA-(AR)-201108-1	Germany	Earth Speakr	German Federal Foreign Office (Statement by Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act in Ministerial Article	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aamt/zugastimaa/tdot-2020/-/2410184	21.06.2021	German	08.11.2020	Digital communication on EU-Presidency and child participation	Adults	Children

GE-MA-SPA-(VM)-201120-1	Germany	Maas Video Message for the World Children's Day	Heiko Maas (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act/Video Message	Video Message from 20.11.2020 on the Facebook account "Auswärtiges Amt". Video description under which it can be found online: „Heute, 31 Jahre nach Verabschiedung der Kinderrechtskonvention durch die UN-Vollversammlung, sind der weltweite Schutz von Kindern und die Wahrung ihrer Rechte leider immer noch keine Selbstverständlichkeit."	21.06.2021	Transcribed in German	20.11.2020	Video Message addressed to the public	Adults	Children
GE-MÜ-SPA-200901-1	Germany	Statement von Staatsministerin Michelle Müntefering im CULT-Ausschuss des EP anlässlich des Austauschs im Rahmen der deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft	Michelle Müntefering (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD)	Speech Act	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/muentefering-cult-ep/2382596	21.06.2021	German	01.09.2020	EP CULT-Committee; in presence of MEPs	Adults	Adults/ Children/ Young people
FI-HE-SPA-190911-1	Finland	Opening speech by Minister of Justice Henriksson at the Conference on the Interaction between Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights	Anna-Maja Henriksson (Minister of Justice)	Swedish People's Party (Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue, RKP)	Speech Act	https://oikeusministerio.fi/-/opening-speech-by-minister-of-justice-henriksson-at-the-conference-on-the-interaction-between-democracy-the-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-at-finl?languageId=en_US	21.06.2021	English	11.09.2019	EU-Presidency Conference on the Interaction between Democracy, the Rule Of Law and Fundamental Rights	Adults	Children
FI-SA-SPA-190701-1	Finland	Opening of the EU Youth Conference Creating opportunities for youth	Annika Saarikko (Minister of Science and Culture[29])	Centre Party of Finland (Suomen Keskusta)	Speech Act	https://minedu.fi/en/-/opening-of-the-eu-youth-conference-creating-opportunities-for-youth	21.06.2021	English	01.07.2019	EU Youth Conference in Helsinki; Young people in European setting	Young people	Young people
FI-RI-SPA-190708-1	Finland	Prime Minister Antti Rinne at the official opening of Finland's Presidency of	Antti Rinne (Prime Minister of Finland[30])	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-//10616/paaministeri-antti-rinne-eu-puheenjohtajakauden-virallisessa-avajaistapahtumassa-toolonlahden-kesapaiva-	21.06.2021	English	08.07.2019	Official opening of Finland's Presidency of the Council of the EU "Summer Day at Töölönlahti"	Adults	Adults/ Children/ Young people

[29] Minister at time of EU Youth Conference (the Finnish Ministry of Science and Culture oversees Youth matters).
[30] Finnish Prime Minister at time of speech.

		the Council of the EU "Summer Day at Töölönlahti"										
FI-RI-SPA-191016-1	Finland	Speech by Prime Minister Antti Rinne at the Tripartite Social Summit in Brussels	Antti Rinne (Prime Minister of Finland)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://vnk.fi/en/-/paaministerin-puheenvuoro-sosiaalialan-kolmikanta-huippukokouksessa-brysselissa-16-10-2019	21.06.2021	English	16.10.2019	Speech outlining the "Economy of Wellbeing"-approach and its link to investment; context information on "Economy of Wellbeing" rather than focus on children	Adults	Adults
FI-RI-SPA-191205-1	Finland	Prime Minister Antti Rinne at the celebration of Finnish Independence Day Party for Children	Antti Rinne (Prime Minister of Finland)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-//10616/paaministeri-antti-rinne-suomen-lasten-itsenaisyyspaivan-juhlassa-5-12-2019	21.06.2021	Translated from Finnish/Swedish into English for MAXQDA analysis[31]	05.12.2019	Event for children organised the evening before the Finnish Independence Day; In the period of the EU-Presidency; Rinne's last speech as Prime Minister; focus entirely on children	Children	Children
FI-KO-SPA-(VM)-191119-1	Finland	Video Message before EYCS November 19, 2019, Finland	Hanna Kosonen (Minister for Science and Culture[32])	Centre Party of Finland (Suomen Keskusta)	Speech Act Video before EYCS 22.11.2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-Wv8QMLbqw&ab_channel=EU2019FI	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	19.11.2019	Video Message aimed at other EU Member States and European Citizens	Adults	Young people
FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1	Finland	Press Conference EYCS on November 21, 2019, Minister Hanna Kosonen	Hanna Kosonen (Minister for Science and Culture)	Centre Party of Finland (Suomen Keskusta)	Speech Act at Press Conference	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/media-galleries/eycs/2019-21-22-eycs/?slide=2 Speech at 17:05:42 - 17:13:00	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	21.11.2019	Press conference in presence of a Commissioner, ministers and journalists	Adults	Young people
FI-KO-SPA-(CS)-191122-1	Finland	EYCS November 22, 2019, Finland	Hanna Kosonen (Minister for Science and Culture)	Centre Party of Finland (Suomen Keskusta)	Transcript EYCS 22.11.2019	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23798?start_time=1468 Several speech interventions during EYCS: most relevant at	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.11.2019	EYCS-Session; Youth Ministers and one youth representative	Adults/ Young people in the room	Young people

[31] Translation was checked and approved by a native speaker.
[32] Minister at time of EYCS.

						9:27:48 - 09:30:40 09:32:40 - 09:34:20 09:42:22 - 09:46:12 11:31:58 - 11:34:35						
FI-KO-SPA-(DS)-191122-2	Finland	Speech Act Doorstep EYCS November 22, 2019, Finland	Hanna Kosonen (Minister for Science and Culture)	Centre Party of Finland (Suomen Keskusta)	Speech Act Doorstep	https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20191121-education-youth-culture-and-sport-council-november-2019/125905-doorstep-by-finland-s-eu-presidency-kosonen-20191122	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.11.2019	Interview/ Statement in presence of journalists; EU-setting	Adults	Young people
FI-TU-SPA-190830-1	Finland	Speech by Minister for European Affairs Tytti Tuppurainen at the Europe Forum Turku	Tytti Tuppurainen (Minister of European Affairs of Finland)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/10616/eurooppaministeri-tytti-tuppuraisen-puhe-turun-eurooppa-foorumissa-30-8-2019	21.06.2021	English	30.08.2019	Conference during Finnish Presidency but held at national level	Adults	Adults/ Children/ Young people
FI-TU-SPA-190911-1	Finland	Opening speech by Minister for European Affairs Tytti Tuppurainen at Conference on the Interaction between Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights at Finlandia Hall	Tytti Tuppurainen (Minister of European Affairs of Finland)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-//10616/opening-speech-by-minister-for-european-affairs-tytti-tuppurainen-at-conference-on-the-interaction-between-democracy-the-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-r	21.06.2021	English	11.09.2019	Conference was part of the official programme of Finland's Presidency; in presence of Commissioners and EU officials	Adults	Adults/ Young people/ Children (where the topic is future generations)
FI-TU-SPA-191113-1	Finland	Speech at the European Parliament at the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	Tytti Tuppurainen (Minister of European Affairs of Finland)	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP)	Speech Act	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-11-13-ITM-017_EN.html	21.06.2021	English	13.11.2019	European Parliament; in presence of MEPs and Members of the Commission	Adults	Children

3. Presidency-Programmes, Presidency-Discussion-Papers and other Non-Oral Statements[33]

Document identifier	Country	Title	Author	Type of Document	Details	URL	Last Accessed	Date	Target Audience	Main target group
RO-PP-190115-1	Romania	Romania Council Presidency-Programme "Cohesion, A Common European Value"	Presidency	Programme	English	https://www.romania2019.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/en_rogramme_ropres2019.pdf	21.06.2021	15.01.2019	Adults	Adults/ Young people
RO-PDP-190522-1	Romania	Young people as agents of democracy in the EU	Presidency	Presidency-Discussion-Paper	English	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8763-2019-INIT/en/pdf	21.06.2021	22.05.2019	Adults	Young people
RO-CC-190605-1	Romania	Council conclusions on young creative generations	Presidency/Council	Council Conclusions	English	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0605(03)&from=ES	21.06.2021	05.06.2019 (adopted in EYCS 23.05.2019)	Adults	Young people
GE-MA-AR-20-1	Germany	Preface by Heiko Maas (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany)	EP in cooperation with the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union; Preface by Heiko Maas (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany)	Brochure	English	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/art-collection/pdf/en-art-at-ep-works-of-art-from-germany.pdf	21.06.2021	2020 (exact date not specified)	Adults	Children
GE-PP-200701-1	Germany	Germany Council Presidency-Programme "Together for Europe's recovery"	Presidency	Programme	English	https://www.eu2020.de/blob/2360248/e0312c50f910931819ab67f630d15b2f/06-30-pdf-programm-en-data.pdf	21.06.2021	01.07.2020	Adults	Adults/ Young people

[33] Documents in table ordered according to (i) country (ii) date (iii) type of document.

GE-CC-201120-1	Germany	Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on fostering democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe	Presidency/Council	Council Conclusions	English	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13177-2020-INIT/en/pdf	21.06.2021	20.11.2020 (adopted in EYCS 30.11.2020)	Adults	Young people
GE-PDP-201130-1	Germany	Youth mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond – Revitalising international youth exchanges and cross-border volunteering activities	Presidency	Presidency-Discussion-Paper	English	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46850/presidency-discussion-paper_youth-mobility.pdf	21.06.2021	30.11.2020	Adults	Young people
FI-PP-190626-1	Finland	Finland Council Presidency-Programme "Sustainable Europe – Sustainable Future"	Finnish Government (Presidency)	Programme	English	https://eu2019.fi/documents/11707387/14346258/EU2019FI-EU-puheenjohtajakauden-ohjelma-en.pdf/3556b7f1-16df-148c-6f59-2b2816611b36/EU2019FI-EU-puheenjohtajakauden-ohjelma-en.pdf	21.06.2021	26.06.2019	Adults	Adults/ Young people
FI-PDP-191111-1	Finland	A vision for youth work in Europe – climate change, young people and youth work	Presidency	Presidency-Discussion-Paper	English	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13398-2019-INIT/en/pdf	21.06.2021	11.11.2019	Adults	Young people
FI-CC-191210-1	Finland	Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Digital Youth Work	Presidency/Council	Council Conclusions	English	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ad692045-1b46-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF	21.06.2021	10.12.2019 (adopted in EYCS 22.11.2019)	Adults	Young People

Appendix B: Codes, Definitions and Typical Examples of Code Attribution

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Children

Code definition:

This code is attributed when the segment relates to children (when the notion of child is used, or the context makes clear that people under 18 are meant).

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"In all policies affecting children, the main principle should be to ensure the best interests of the child" (FI-TU-SPA-191113-1:10).

Youth

Code definition:

This code is attributed when the segment relates to youth (when the notion of youth is used, or the context makes clear that youth are meant).

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"We want the voice of the youth to be heard otherwise we have a risk of young people losing their confidence in decision-making" (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:8).

Young people

Code definition:

This code is attributed when the segment relates to young people (when the notion of young people is used, or the context makes clear that young people are meant).

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"Adolescence is a special and magical phase in life. So it is our job to make sure young people can enjoy this brief stage in life that ultimately shapes the rest of their lives" (FI-SA-SPA-190701-1:2).

1. Child as subject

Code definition:

The primary function of this code is to bundle all codes placed on the subject spectrum of the matrix. This code is an ideal type rather than a real type since its attribution would require the conditions (across the three subject-sided spheres of recognition but most importantly in the solidarity-sphere) to be fulfilled.

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

/

1.1 In(ter)dependent child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position vis-à-vis or disconnected from the family and other support systems. This code is linked to an image of the child that upholds a dialogical and mutually beneficial relationship with adults so as to be perceived as an in(ter)dependent individual.

Related image: Confident child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"You are ten years old and have been born and raised into big children at a time when the world has somehow become smaller" (FI-RI-SPA-191205-1:1).

1.1.1 Confident child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position vis-à-vis or disconnected from the family and other support systems. This code is linked to an image of the child recognised as confident in its actions. It is close to the image of the valued child, but the confident child is not valued for being a member of the community but in relation to the family-structure.

Related image: In(ter)dependent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"I wish you to fulfil your dreams, to have confidence in your own strengths and to fight with the enthusiasm characteristic of your age to pay for your way in life, as you wish" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:11).

1.2 Experienced child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as being able and capable of a significant degree of understanding of the world around it. The experienced child can make up its own mind about reality and is not just a romanticised "becoming" in a sheltered environment (or if it is, the child is aware of the limits this entails).

Related image:

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

“It is important that in the future we will continue the dialogue, a permanent dialogue so that you will keep finding the right solutions because you know them best, because you are the young people" (RO-MA-SPA-190328-1:7).

1.3 Child as rights bearer

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its legal status or as acting upon its rights (and claiming, e.g., more effective policy), or to references where the duty of the state or other political and societal actors to respect children's rights is invoked.

Related image: Responsible child; Moral child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"Honourable President, honourable Members, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children’s rights are universal" (FI-TU-SPA-191113-1:21).

1.3.1 Responsible and moral child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its legal status or position in the community of rights and as knowing the codes and rules of this community. It reflects a child acting upon its rights in a reasonable, moral and responsible way (and claiming, e.g., more effective policy). The child is able to take responsibility for itself and people or issues around it. The child is perceived as having developed a moral compass and thus as being worthy of respect.

Related image: Child as rights bearer

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"): "it is on your shoulders that the European project, its consolidation and its adaptation to your requirements and new living conditions continue" (RO-DĂ-SPA-190506-1:2).

1.4 Included child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position as a member of a certain community of values. Being included in the community through involvement in public life, for example, is a condition for the child to develop self-esteem.

Related image: Child as active citizen; Valued child; Competent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"It is important to listen to these voices, and to take them seriously. In this way we create a shared cultural and social space for exchange and action. Our aim with this artwork and the entire cultural programme is to help strengthen the European public sphere" (GE-MA-AR-20-1:9).

1.4.1 Child as active citizen

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position as a member of the community of values and, more precisely, when this relates to making its voice heard (through the exercise of participation rights or not), demonstrating or other (in-)formal forms of participation. Careful: Being portrayed as active citizen can be a future-oriented portrayal or a "window-dressing", especially when it is over-emphasised in contexts that do not lend themselves for children to participate.

This code is related to the code "competent child", as competence is one possible way through which the child's status as citizen can be established.

Related image: Competent child; Valued child; Included child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"to motivate young people to be active citizens and support their belief in participation" (FI-PDP-191111-1:4).

1.4.2 Valued child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position in the community of values or as being valued for being an asset for the community. This code is linked to a feeling of solidarity towards children as co-citizens that can be a resource for society (not only for societal progress but because it provides the child with a feeling of self-esteem).

Related image: Included child; Competent child; Child as active citizen

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"As our Presidency motto puts it: ‘Sustainable Europe – Sustainable Future’. This is the kind of ‘ode to joy’ that we want to leave for future generations" (FI-TU-SPA-190911-1:3).

1.4.3 Competent child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as competent in a sense that it is, e.g., able to represent the interests of other children, that it can be entrusted with tasks, that it is capable of understanding and processing (political) knowledge and of receiving feedback. As such, competence is a condition for the child's status or position as a member of the community of values and can be a criterium of exclusion/inclusion to the status of citizen.

Related image: Included child; Child as active citizen; Valued child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"They are brilliant children as other million brilliant children from all over the world you will meet them and definitely will speak with them" (RO-CO-SPA-190402-1:7).

2. Child as object

Code definition:

The primary function of this code is to bundle all codes placed on the object spectrum of the matrix. This code is an ideal type rather than a real type since its attribution would require all conditions (across the three object-sided spheres of recognition) to be fulfilled.

Code generation: deductive

Example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

/

2.1 Dependent child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as depending on its parents in a sense that it remains hidden behind the nucleus of the family. In this portrayal, the child is the object of a love-directed “sheltered childhood” (“behütete Kindheit“) (Bühler-Niederberger 2020:16) rather than the subject of its own life.

Related image: Child as object of education; Vulnerable child in need of protection; Innocent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"A child loved by the family, healthy, protected by the state and who has access to education, encouraged to be innovative and responsible, is a happy child with solid prospects for the future" (RO-DĂ-SPA-(PR)-190601-1:1).

2.1.1 Child as object of education

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as depending on adults and parents, who are in charge of the child's education. In this portrayal, the child is an object to be formed rather than a subject with a right to education.

Related image: Dependent child; Vulnerable child in need of protection; Innocent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"In der Regel sind es die Kinder, von denen wir erwarten, dass sie in der Schule gut aufpassen und sich an Regeln halten" (GE-MA-SPA-(AR)-201108-1:2).

2.1.2 Vulnerable child in need of protection

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as vulnerable in a sense that it depends on adults and parents, who are in charge of the child's protection and development to become a "being". In this portrayal, the child is an object with needs rather than a subject with rights.

Related image: Dependent child; Child as object of education

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"Kinder gehören zu den schwächsten, den schutzbedürftigsten Gruppen unserer Gesellschaft" (GE-GI-SPA-(VM)-200929-1:3).

2.2 Innocent child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its status or position vis-à-vis the family and other support systems. This code is linked to an image of the child as pure and good-intentioned, which is (and should be) preserved from the political and dangerous world of adults.

Related image:

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"In youth policy, as is politics in general, I believe we should put more effort into making sure we can give our children and young people prospects of hope. Public discussion often tends to revolve around threats, fears and difficulties. I consider it very important that all of us, not only politicians and researchers but also professionals working with young people, work hard to make sure every single youngster has the courage to dream" (FI-SA-SPA-190701-1:2).

(RO-PP-190115-1:60)

2.3 Child as subordinate rights holder

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its legal status or position in the community of rights and as being entitled to different (less substantial) rights than adults. The child is perceived as different from the adult in a legal sense and thus as worthy of less responsibility (over its own actions). This inhibits the child's attainment of self-respect.

Related image: Irresponsible and immoral child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"I will step down to be closer to you because we address the young people today" (RO-MA-SPA-190328-1:3).

2.3.1 Irresponsible and immoral child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed in relation to its legal status or position in the community of rights and as not yet capable of grasping the codes and rules of this community. The child is perceived as outside the realm where it can judge what is moral and right, which in turn limits the extent to which it can be respected. The immoral and irresponsible child provides a potential threat to the community of rights and reflects the traditional "Dionysian child image" (Jenks 2005).

Related image: Child as subordinate rights holder

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"Despite the above recent improvements, the perception that we are dealing with a young generation that is somewhat disengaged from the traditional forms of participation in decision-making (voting, political parties, youth organisations, participation in public debates, etc.) still persists" (RO-PDP-190522-1:4).

2.4 Excluded child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is excluded from the community of values, the adult world, and thus inhibited from participating in this sphere. The exclusion can be justified by several deficiencies (e.g., incompetence or age) or demonisation of children (e.g., child as risk).

Related image: Child as denizen/future citizen; Child as problem and risk; Incompetent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

“Our generation should also ask the question: Tomorrow belongs to – whom?” (FI-TU-SPA-190830-1:1)

2.4.1 Child as a problem and risk

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as being a problem for society in a sense that it creates or is particularly exposed to problems. The child as risk or problem is a threat to the progress and well-functioning of society and thus needs to be contained by preventive measures such as investing in children.

Related image: Excluded child; Child as denizen/future citizen; Incompetent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"): "young people face many major changes, climate change population ageing and digitalisation just to name but a few" (FI-KO-SPA-(VM)-191119-1:4).

2.4.2 Incompetent child

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as incompetent in a sense that it is not capable or not able to fulfil certain (mental) tasks that would grant it the esteem from the adults around it. Thus, the exclusion from the status as a full member of the community of values is justified by the child's "deficiency", which translates as incompetence.

Related image: Excluded child; Child as denizen/future citizen; Child as problem and risk

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"They [young people] should be better informed and involved when discussing matters concerning them, including the rule of law" (FI-TU-SPA-190911-1:2).

2.4.3 Child as denizen/future citizen

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as excluded from the status of citizenship. Being denied the status of citizen is a form of exclusion from the community of values.

Related image: Excluded child; Child as problem and risk; Incompetent child

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"): "Everybody knows young Greta Thunberg doing a great job raising awareness" (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:8).

2.5 Child as subject to

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as competent in an apparently tokenistic (unmeaningful) or instrumental way, through which the attainment of a genuine status as a full member of the community of values is turned into a utopian and unreachable endeavour. This portrayal is often not straightforward but operates on a subtle level.

Related image: Child as investment into the nation's future; Child as political resource

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"):

"I want the Bucharest Declaration to lay the foundations of a mechanism through which children's opinion will become a constant component of decision-making processes at European level" (RO-SPA-(PR)-190506-1:1).

2.5.1 Child as political resource (instrumentalised)

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as a political instrument that can help justify political measures more than as a meaningful political participant. This code and image is different from the "child as investment into the nation's future" as it can be completely non-fungible and illustrates that the child's place in the public sphere is tokenistic and contingent on external factors or political initiatives. It builds on the image of the "excluded child", combining it with a political message.

Related image: Child as subject to; Child as investment into the nation's future

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"): "Youth are the future of Romania, its strategic resource" (RO-BI-SPA-190328-1:10).

2.5.2 Child as investment into the nation's future

Code definition: This code is attributed when the child is portrayed as a future-oriented investment that aims to achieve progress for society and the nation as a whole. The child is equated to an object and instrument for social progress rather than a subject in itself.

Related image: Child as subject to; Child as political resource

Code generation: deductive

Typical example of code attribution ("*Ankerbeispiel*"): "Investing in our youth is investing in our future" (FI-KO-SPA-(PC)-191121-1:7).

Appendix C: All Coded Segments from the Document Analysis

See separate file.

Appendix D: Small-Scale Document Analysis for Defining the Child as Subject

1. Description of Analysis

This small-scale analysis of speeches held by junior ambassadors and children in the Romanian and Finnish Presidency is not part of the empirical analysis of this thesis but fulfils the purpose of establishing a definition of the "child as subject" that reflects children's views. The seven analysed speeches were all held during the Romanian and Finnish Presidency, in EYCS-meetings, at the 12th European Forum on the Rights of the Child or at the International Conference on "Children's Participation in Decision-Making and Policy-Making at European Union level" which produced the "Bucharest EU Children's Declaration". Moreover, as counterparts to the adult speeches which were the object of the document analysis of this thesis, they provide an alternative perspective.

The three main themes were identified in the seven child speeches through an inductive coding process (with Janta et al.'s (2021) Commission study in mind). The main quotes on the basis of which the themes were identified are listed below. What appears clearly from the children's contributions is the conscious use of the word "children" to talk about the involvement of younger people in politics. This confirms the choice of the expression "children" used in this thesis.

Three conditions for the fulfilment of the subject-status of a child are:

- **(i)** The granting of active membership (citizenship) in the community (not as future citizen) = **Child as active community member (citizen)**
- **(ii)** The assumption of competence = **Competent child**
- **(iii)** Valuation instead of symbolism and tokenism = **Valued child**

The three code definitions correspond to the definitions of the same codes in the actual document analysis (see Appendix B).

(i) Child as active community member (citizen) (not future citizen):

- "I will add that the youth and the children represent the future. The future of work, the future of the European community and the future decision-making group. We are active citizens that can contribute to the future and also to the present" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:25).
- "Why? Because we represent one in every five Europeans and we are writing our own story through marches, school strikes, speaking up and sharing our opinions. Because we want to be consulted on issues that influence our lives directly, both as European citizens, as well as citizens of our own countries" (RO-VO-SPA-190522-1:7).
- "we are the future but also the present" (RO-FA/CHI-SPA-190507-1:7).
- "Children today, youth of tomorrow and the adults of the day after" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:21).
- "Children and youth can be impartial guardians of democracy" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:25).
- "we should really work on empowering the community in believing that we are not just children we are more than that we are not only an investment we can do things right now and we can work alongside you" (RO-PA-SPA-190403-1:2).
- "I would like to see us talking less about children and the children talk more" (RO-AR-SPA-190403-1:1).
- "Thousands of young people and children have marched in the footstep of Greta Thunberg in order to have this planet of ours in the future as well" (FI-NY-SPA-191122-1:7).
- "The Bucharest EU children's declaration makes it clear that we are not helpless dreamers but members of EU society who are ready to take an active role" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:19).

(ii) Competent child:

- "The present generation of children has already demonstrated its capacity of understanding and being involved in the critical issues of the present. Let us remember the students that demonstrate every week for climate change. This is one of the ways to make us better citizens of Europe in a better Europe" (RO-FA/CHI-SPA-190507-1:13).
- "We don't want to hear, children don't know anything because the present generation has already demonstrated its capacity of understanding and involving in the critical issue of the present" (RO-FA/CHI-SPA-190507-1:8).
- "The present generation of children has already demonstrated its capacity of understanding and involving in the critical issues of the present. We stand for participation as part of our

commitment to giving back to our families and our communities a part of what was invested in us, as early as possible" (RO-VO-SPA-190522-1:11-12).

- "We got to know our strengths, interests and needs probably better than any generation before us, because we've been listening, observing and interacting with the world around us in unprecedented manners" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:13).
- "Our vision and our hope is that when discussing about children and young people as agents of democracy in the European Union, we will ditch the proverbial "I think we should" and replace it with "I did; We did"" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:20).
- "So I think it's really important to focus on the fact that children are not going to be relevant only from the 16 when we think in the future we need to see that children are going to be so precocious we are not going to be able to keep up with them" (RO-AR-SPA-190403-1:1).

(iii) Valued child (No tokenism and symbolism, but valuation and appreciation)**:**

- "We are more than our ad hoc presence at public events and the nice pictures of us smiling together with decision-makers" (RO-VO-SPA-190522-1:10).
- "Under Article 12, it gives all children the right to participate, to be consulted in decisions that concern them, to engage, be listened to and be heard, in accordance with their age and maturity, things that are not capable of happening if we still live under the "you are just a child" paradigm. One in five Europeans is "just a child" which translates into the fact that more than 20% of our future is at risk if we do not start acting today making children take part in the decisional processes, this way making better adults, better citizens" (RO-PA-SPA-190402-1:5).
- "We are all working for the same ideals: a Europe of cohesion, a Europe in which we have a voice, a Europe that listens [to] the next generation and takes the all so necessary steps in making us be a part of the future, not just a symbol" (RO-PA-SPA-190402-1:8).
- "Lacking the kind of social obligations that tie down the adults, children and young people are more than ever free to do what they do better - explore the world and understand it. This means that our perception is a unique mix between maturity and innocence, between sensibility and hope" (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:14).
- "So that's why I would like to see this instrument who will sanction which will sanction persons or institutions who failed to achieve that grade of child participation or child representativity when the actions which they are trying to convey or they are trying to implement focus on children" (RO-AR-SPA-190403-1:1).

- “Interests: They may not come off immediately. Some of us would be out in the streets every Friday militating for the change we wish to see. Some of us would be in the classroom, imagining the world we are going to build when we hold positions that allow us to further change. But we all have something in common: we see ourselves living in an EU that encourages voicing our opinions through more than the simple act of saying so, a Europe where these opinions are not just heard and listened, but where they are recorded, analysed and processed through adequate methodology and instruments” (RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1:15).

2. Speech Acts for Defining the Child as Subject

Document identifier	Country	Title	Author	Type of Document	URL	Last Accessed	Details	Date	Arena	Target Audience	Main Target Group
RO-FA/CHI-SPA-190507-1	Romania	Speech by Arlett Faifer and Rares Chioreanu at the International Conference on child participation	Arlett Faifer and Rares Chioreanu (Members of the Romanian Children's Board)	Speech Act	https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/1121/file/Report%20Child%20Participation%20&%20Romanian%20EU%20Presidency.pdf Pages 50-51	21.06.2021	English	07.05.2019	EU-Presidency Conference in Bucharest; in presence of children; mediatized at EU-level	Children and Adults	Children and Adults
RO-VO-SPA-190402-1	Romania	Speech by Rares Voicu (Junior Ambassador to the EU) at the Rights of the Child Forum	Rares Voicu (Junior Ambassador to the EU)	Speech Act	https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/1121/file/Report%20Child%20Participation%20&%20Romanian%20EU%20Presidency.pdf Pages 49-50	21.06.2021	English	02.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children and Adults	Children and Adults
RO-PA-SPA-190402-1	Romania	Speech by Tudor Panait (Junior Ambassador to the EU) during the Rights of the Child Forum	Tudor Panait (Junior Ambassador to the EU)	Speech Act	https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/1121/file/Report%20Child%20Participation%20&%20Romanian%20EU%20Presidency.pdf Pages 47-48	21.06.2021	English	02.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children and Adults	Children and Adults
RO-PA-SPA-190403-1	Romania	Comment Tudor Panait_ April 3, 2019_Forum on the Rights of the Child	Tudor Panait (Junior Ambassador to the EU)	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/_F9TmcPuqOk?t=4263 Speech Act at 01:11:03 - 01:12:47	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	03.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children and Adults	Children and Adults
RO-AR-SPA-190403-1	Romania	Comment Ariana Ardelean April 3, 2019, Forum on the Rights of the Child	Ariana Ardelean (Junior Ambassador to the EU)	Speech Act	https://youtu.be/_F9TmcPuqOk?t=14996 Speech Act at 04:09:56 - 04:12:44	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	03.04.2019	12th Forum on the Rights of the Child: in presence of the four Junior Ambassadors, EU-Officials and civil society representatives	Children and Adults	Children and Adults
RO-VO-SPA-190522-1	Romania	Speech by Rares Voicu (Junior Ambassador to the EU) on the Education Council	Rares Voicu (Junior Ambassador to the EU)	Speech Act	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23563?start_time=0 Speech Act at	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	EYCS-Session (Education); Youth Ministers and one Junior Ambassador	Adults	Children and Adults

		of Ministers Meeting (EYCS Romania Education, May 22, 2019)			13:50:10 - 13:56:23						
RO-AR/CHRI-SPA-190522-1	Romania	Speeches by Ariana Ardelean (Junior Ambassador to the EU) and Francesca Maria Cristea (EU Youth Delegate) at EYCS Romania Youth, May 22, 2019, Romania	Ariana Ardelean (Junior Ambassador to the EU) and Francesca Maria Cristea (EU Youth Delegate)	Speech Acts	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23561?start_time=0 Speech Acts at 8:48:38 - 09:00:24	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.05.2019	EYCS-Session (Youth); Youth Ministers and two children (one Junior Ambassador and one Youth Delegate)	Adults	Children/ Young people/ Adults
FI-NY-SPA-191122-1	Finland	Speech by Sara Nyman at EYCS November 22, 2019, Finland's EU-Presidency	Sara Nyman (Vice-president of the Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi expert-group for youth participation and elections)	Speech Act	https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/23798?start_time=1468 Several speech interventions during EYCS: most relevant at 09:46:14-09:52:35 11:31:23-11:31:53	21.06.2021	Transcribed in English	22.11.2019	EYCS-Session; Youth Ministers and one youth representative	Adults	Adults