Book Review: Youth and Public Policy in Estonia
Tanja Dibou
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What is This?
appropriately pitched to undergraduate students and will prove popular, accessible and academically beneficial to those studying criminology, youth crime, youth justice and related areas.

Reference


Reviewed by: Tanja Dibou, The Institute of Political Science and Governance, Tallinn University, Estonia.

I’ve often heard from youth workers, as well as from other experts, that the future development of youth policy depends on the active participation of various concerned actors, including children and young people. One option for how the views, experiences and opinions of these various actors can be taken into account is by carrying out research on topics related to youth to generate knowledge and understanding which can positively inform public policies. Indeed, as the European Youth Strategy (2010–2018) emphasizes: ‘Better knowledge and understanding of the living conditions of young women and men needs to be gathered and shared with other policy fields so as to enable appropriate and timely measures to be taken’ (The Council of the European Union, 2009). Thus it is heartening that studies on youth and youth policy in Estonia have increased in volume over the last 10 years to encompass increasingly professional, meaningful and systematic research standards. On this basis I would strongly encourage you to read *Youth and Public Policy in Estonia* which provides a contemporary example of Estonian youth policy research.

Concerned to provide a quality youth policy review and evaluation, the study draws on a mixture of methods, including an analysis of documents, legislation, development plans, budgets and statistics in combination with semi-structured interviews, focus groups, a youth poll and a field visit, to address the many issues affecting young people in Estonia. The analysis is set out across eight chapters, each focusing on a specific issue for Estonian youth policy (including policy planning, policy legislation implementation and delivery, policy coherence, co-operation) or a specific policy domain (including demographics, education, employment, mobility, migration, health, youth participation). A major advantage of the book is that the text is accessible and compact, with chapters that can be read individually or as a whole.

The book begins with a brief summary of the methodology, the motivations of the research team and the objectives of the study. It then introduces the general situation of young people in Estonia and the key issues that affect their lives. Chapter 3 outlines the primary legislation, principles that inform the Estonian youth policy context. Herein there is a particular focus on the 24 vulnerabilities that youth policy seeks to address which
includes the need to facilitate cooperation between various stakeholders and the promotion of youth involvement in the policy making process. The fourth chapter is devoted to outlining the main institutions and organizations dealing with youth policy, while the fifth analyses how the lives of young people are affected by youth policy. Chapter 6 draws attention to overall integration of youth policy, inter-sectoral cooperation and youth network coordination and highlights how the associated ministries make strategic plans and how research is conducted. Finally, the book focuses on practical proposals for the key stakeholders and organizations involved in youth policy, both to enhance current practice and to eliminate weaknesses. Overall, Estonian youth policy provides an interesting example of an approach that combines the integration of EU frameworks for youth policies (the protective model) with several traditions of Soviet youth work (the centralized model); highlighting that ‘youth policy in Estonia is still in a transition period’ (p. 55) (the transitional model).

There are, of course, issues within the book that would benefit from some further exploration. For example, while the report emphasizes the importance of the idea of ‘youth as a resource’ within Estonian youth strategy, it lacks a deep explanation and analysis of why policy and practice are predominantly driven by the ‘youth as a problem’ approach. A greater diversity of expert views on Estonian youth policy would also have proved welcome, as would more detailed explanation and analysis of the mechanisms, other than state funding, in place for supporting youth policy, particularly that provided by local governments and European Union structural funds. Furthermore in comparing the Estonian approach with reports from other countries, one minor weaknesses is the lack of illustrative material in the form of charts, tables and statistics.

Overall, the book provides an interesting and accessible overview of Estonian youth policy and is likely to prove of interest to lawyers, youth workers and students. It also provides an important overview of new methods and techniques to study young people and youth policy that will be of particular interest to researchers in the field of youth studies and youth policy.

Reference


Reviewed by: Vickie Cooper, School of Humanities and Social Science, Liverpool John Moores University, UK.

Charles Krinsky has brought together 23 chapters, organized across six thematic sections, to address various historic, contemporary, theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of Moral Panics. As such, this edited collection is a salutary reminder of the influence of Stanley Cohen’s Folk Devils and Moral Panics and its relevance to scholars