

# Cluster 3 : Economy, Leisure and Space



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*IVO PILAR, ZAGREB, CROATIA*



# Six case studies



- ❑ Artistic creative start-ups in the suburbs of Naples (Italy)
- ❑ Intergenerational contests and spatial occupations in the city (Finland)
- ❑ Returning young migrants (Slovakia)
- ❑ Self-building; alternative accommodation and public space uses (Spain)
- ❑ Supporters' Varteks Football Club (Croatia)
- ❑ Struggling against hegemony; rural youth in Seto county (Estonia)

# How do young people respond to the conflicts they experience and with what outcomes?



- **Individual and group dimensions of conflict**
- **Active and passive responses**
  - „*We had no idea of the problems we were going to come up against; it was all so complex. We were looking for a pitch, and we got one, but now none of us actually knew how bad a shape it was in, and we didn't have a clue how to maintain a pitch. But then you have no choice: you need this, you need that. It was a property owned by the city but we got the toilet running, we set up a safety fence, we bought goal nets, we chased off the moles, we planted grass. I learned to do things I never thought I would do in my life. In the first season, when they chased off the moles, there were people who came at five in the morning with spades and waited for the moles. People with wives and children. So what does that tell you?*” (Kapelnik, VS, HR)
- **From conflict to social innovation – and back**

# What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?



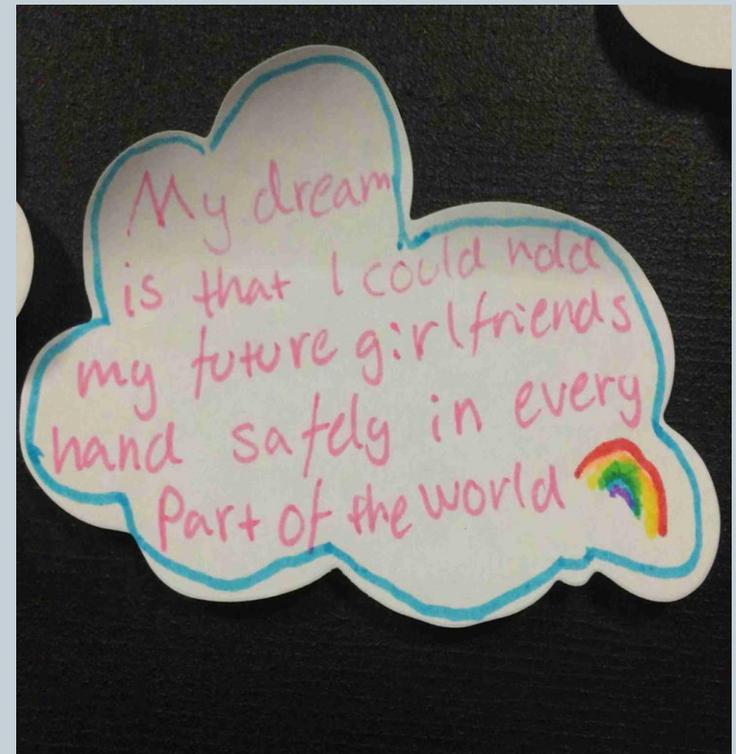
- Institutional space/centre as ‘The great enabler’
- Significant elders – the great enablers: the importance of intergenerational interaction
  - „According to what I saw, one of the most precious things taking shape during performances is intergenerational connections (among the old and the young ones) that are brought to life. Additionally, we don’t confine ourselves to working with kids, we work with parents too. This is not a parking area to us: you come here, you drop your son and then you leave. No! What really matters to us, is that you are looking after your son’s path, and you are listening to us!” (Nino, NSA, IT)
  - „I have learned from this experience that age doesn’t matter when connecting with other people, you know? Perhaps I can bond in a better way with a 90-year-old woman than with someone my own age. This can happen also with kids, you know?” (HQ3, AAS, ES)

# What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?

- **Refutational case: Finland**

- „Who do they think will take their side in the Parliament if they don't vote for those who speak up? It is very, very alarming that young people don't vote so much anymore, because it means the Parliament will be full of these bitter old men who hate everyone and hate their own life probably ... Because if young people don't vote young people into the Parliament, who will then speak up about things such as, 'we have this issue here; we can't make cuts there, because if we make cuts there, it'll have an impact here...' Because those old grandpas in the Parliament don't care about studying. They don't need to study anymore.”

**(Reuben, HSO, FI)**



# Barriers/inhibitors as enablers of activism



- **Croatia:** Commercialisation of football, corruption in CFF, police oppression, privileged position of Varaždin FC
- **Slovakia:** Nepotism, corruption, traditionalism
- **Finland:** Establishment and political system, rise of right wing movements, neo-liberal values
- **Spain:** Housing policies, construction practices, precarious conditions, labour markets
- **Italy:** Social and economic determinants of life chances, destiny in social stratification
- **Estonia:** New elites and prosperity based on Seto culture activism

# Barriers/inhibitors as enablers of activism



- **Structural barriers: (absent) state and neo-liberal values**
- **Structural barriers: patriarchy**
- **Passivity**
  - „I think everyone in Varaždin takes the path of least resistance. No one wants to fight for anything. Just like in the rest of Croatia, actually, everyone just wants to sit back and watch someone else solve their problems. I think supporters are the last so-called subculture that hasn't been destroyed. I mean, not that it hasn't been destroyed, but all others are on thin ice. We're the only ones fighting against something.” (Random, VS, HR)



# What is the role of space in the different forms of social activism of young people?



- **Market pressures and struggle for space**
  - „*Raise the children, everything! Pay the rent ... the reason I like this model of housing (referring to masoveria) is because I think ... if we did not have to pay rent, or we would have to pay much less rent, how would our lives be? Now we dedicate more than 30% of the salary, almost 50% to pay the rent, eh? It is very much, also compared to other countries, right? That is not fair!*” (HQ1, AAS, ES)
- **Given space and appropriation**
  - „*The first practice was the Varteks selection on that pitch in Jalkovec, which looked, at the time, like you'd come to a farmer's field, like there had been horses; the best part is that horses did use to graze there! You come from some First League and end up on a real farmer's field; you come to a playing field that has no façade, that doesn't even have a fence. You could measure the grass in percent; I don't know, eighty percent dirt, twenty percent grass. Those were the initial problems we had to face as soon as we founded the club, no one gave us a stadium nor did anyone give us anything, we had to do absolutely everything from scratch. From scratch!*” (Eminence Grise, VS, HR)
  - „*And the Youth Cultural and Community Centre is quite a good manifestation of it... It is a political place but also everything else, too, and there's quite a lot of political, what is it now... messages [in English]. Political messages on the walls. Yep. There's a lot of political messages on the walls.* „(Juho, HSO, FI)

# What is the role of space in the different forms of social activism of young people?

- **Public space and (temporarily) appropriation**

- *INT: Yep. What do you think, why is it Alppipuisto?*

*JUHO: It is quite peaceful, it's a bit off the map and there aren't that many... People don't go there a lot, it isn't a central place. People are passing by, but few people actually stop there. Of course during summer the park is packed, perhaps. But people are mostly chilled; they aren't passers-by or drunken people. So it has a reputation of being a hippie park or something.*

*INT: So what is the best place to do circus?*

*MATTI: Well, I think it has become the Alppipuisto Park, because all the other hippies hang out there, too. [laughs]*

*INT: Hippies hang out there? Is circus something that hippies do?*

*MATTI: You see... Some people are.... Some are more into dreadlocks and stuff, but then again there are also people who don't seem like hippies. So in that sense we aren't a hippie group, but the core group who started all this probably was. And they felt at home in Alppipuisto Park regardless of why they went there in the first place. So it is a natural choice to go there to do this [circus]. (Matti, Jusso (HSO, FI)*

# What is the role of space in the different forms of social activism of young people?



- **Space and identity**

- *JOHANNA: But, like, you should understand what humour is and when you need to be serious, and also understand the values behind all the activities at the centre.*

*INT: Yep. What are they in your opinion?*

*JOHANNA: I don't know whether 'no Nazis' is a value, but we don't discriminate against anyone. Everyone's welcome as they are, and there are gender neutral toilets and all that. We are a no-discrimination zone and the doors are open to everyone. (Johanna, HSO, FI)*

- *„I think that, in general, there is a lack of awareness, and when there is a trouble they automatically see us as squatters. As if the squats were... anyway, a very unfair stigma.” (HQ4, AAS, ES)*



# Space and social engagement: Concluding remarks

- *„[names self-building collective equipment initiative] has been a revulsive, isn't it? The fact of being able to build something of our own, a space that will answer to many of the needs we have. One of the things we have always claimed is the theme of space, when [a collective equipment initiative] closed, we had no space to do things and if we do not have activity, we die, that is ...” (T4, AAS, ES)*

