Cluster 4
Gender and sexuality

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Context

- **Croatia. Zagreb Pride LGBTIQ NGO.** There are conflicts between LGBTIQ people and conservative non-governmental organizations and initiatives, as well as political parties close to the Catholic Church.

- **Germany. Young Muslim Women 'Neo-Muslims'? Social engagement of devout young female Muslims.** Germany today is characterized by an increase in anti-Islamic sentiments.

- **Finland. Young motherhood in multicultural Finland.** Childbirth at a relatively early age is problematised in the public debate, and young mothers experience stigmatisation in everyday life.

- **Portugal. Young Activists on Gender Issue.** In Portugal there is still a significant gender imbalance observed in both public and private spheres.

- **Russia. The Feminist Scene in St. Petersburg and The LGBTQ Scene in St. Petersburg.** The current neoconservative ideology in Russia leads to an increased problematisation of 'nonconventional' identities in terms of gender and sexuality, and creates moral panics around homosexuality and feminism.

Repolitisation of private and new visibility as a base for new conflicts

Based on concepts: 'Homophobia forced me into activism'; Visibility as a political project; Increased visibility leads to increased conflicts.

1. **Social engagement is provoked by personal experience of stigmatization.**

What I always say is that I didn't start with activism by my own choice. Homophobia forced me into activism. No matter how much I love doing what I do, I didn't wake up one morning and said 'Let´s change the world!' It was more like 'we will kill you', [so] you have to fight against that.

(Lars, ZP, Croatia)

Repolitisation of private and new visibility as a base for new conflicts

2. Political project of young people is the visibility of their sexual/gender/religious identity.

Coming out is not necessarily only personal, but also a political thing'
(Borka, ZP, Croatia)

3. Increased visibility leads to a new wave of conflicts.

'Yes, I have received "compliments" when I was out – I swear. Well, very often it was "Hijab-wearing bitch. Get out! Beat it! Go back to your country!" But I was born here. I am in my country.'
(Necla, YMW, Germany)

The inner circle as a space of conflicts

Based on concepts: 'I at least feel good about myself', Important/powerful adults at school, Family, 'In the seminar […] we could speak openly about discrimination'.

1. **Even though the inner circle can provide different type of support, its members often become the main agents of stigmatization.**

I think that the context of conflict I never had the courage to address was that I was in the closet during the whole of high school and I couldn't deal with it. I can´t even begin to imagine on how many levels that can create problems. When your teachers are homophobes and you are a child but have that authority in the classroom that is talking against you. And everyone knows he is talking against you. (Haz, ZP, Croatia)

The inner circle as a space of risks

2. Stigmatization in the inner circle leads to the increasing of importance to being a part of community, where young people can gain a recognition.

Because when you are in a community, you are very relaxed, you feel that they are all your friends, that everything is different, and that they will always understand you there.

(Vika, FEM, Russia)

Activism as a resource and a barrier

Based on concepts: 'A base where I learnt everything I didn't learn in school'; 'It's great to see young people asking me to help them'; Engaging in other forms of activism; 'We don't there are spheres of action we can get involved', 'Someone who shares the same or similar experience'.

1. **The involvement gives an access to new information, skills, support, recognition.**

… And besides, I wasn't someone who was regularly in school, I didn't have a basic knowledge of practically anything and Zagreb Pride was really a base where I learnt everything I didn't learn in school. (Lotrius, ZP, Croatia)

Activism as a resource and a barrier

2. The involvement increases reflexivity, gives a wider range of actions, contributes to the involvement with more initiatives.

In the seminar […] we could speak openly about discrimination. And then the perspective of the black girls. [they experience] multiple discrimination. That made me realize: Sometimes I have phases when I am upset that discriminated because of my headscarf. They can take off the headscarf. But their skin is still black. (Emine, YMW, Germany)

3. An access to the field can be difficult and not clear.

I think what's missing, which was also what I felt, is that we don't know there are spheres of action we can get involved in. For example, I didn't know in high school, or, ok, maybe it was also lack of interest, but I did not know because they did not give me information.
(Guilhermina, YAGI, Portugal)

Conclusion

1. In this cluster the specificity of gender/sexuality is associated with the lack of recognition of youth identities and lifestyles in everyday life.
2. Social engagement is a way to create social changes and to achieve recognition at the everyday level.
3. One of the most important mechanisms of youth activism in the struggle for recognition and legitimacy is visibility.
4. But this form of political project leads to new risks:
    a. New wave of stigmatization and discrimination
    b. In the frame of slow social changes there is a risk to loose a recognition and possibility to be visible after leaving the activist community.