Youth involvement – Baseline data - who, where, when, what, how?

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promoting youth involvement and social engagement

Content of this session

1. General participation model – What is social participation?
2. How is youth participation different?
3. Introducing our survey
4. Comparing social participation of adults and youth
5. Conclusion

General participation model – What is social participation?

- Social and political engagement refer to "activities by ordinary citizens intended to influence circumstances in society that are of relevance to others" (Ekman and Amnå, 2012)

- According to Adler & Goggin (2005) they stretch from:

private (individual) action

to public (collective) action

Dear Crayola, please help us recycle markers. In my class, kids put the markers in the stinky trash can! When I saw that I reminded myself not to do that. –Delaney Allen WE CAN DO THIS!!!

Individual-level theories of engagement

- **Cognitive mobilization model**: Individuals with higher levels of political interest /information will be more likely to become dissatisfied + inclined to protest (Norris 1999, Dalton 2008) ➔ emphasis on information

- **Civic voluntarism model** (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995, Grasso 2018): Feeling of involvement with the political system emphasized.
  ➔ satisfaction with democracy/with institutions

- **The structural availability model** (see McAdam 1986, Passy 2001): Organisational membership/ social networks facilitate recruitment to political action. ➔ emphasis on social surroundings and socialisation

- **General incentive model** (Whiteley and Seyd´s 1992): emphasizes the role of collective benefits ➔ emphasises role of values

Who participates?

- '*purposive action theory*' (Coleman 1986): citizens engage in collective and individual action because they expect positive effects (of whatever kind: emotional, moral, material, individual, collective)
- However: very different trajectories are followed by youth based on their opportunities structure and their imagined future (Raffo & Reeves, 2000, Evans, 2002) that influence their agency

- ➔ Problems external to the young person (family problems, neighbourhood conflict, problems with making ends meet) influence the way in which people involve socially
- ➔ In order to engage, you have to be able to imagine a better future!
- ➔ But engaged people can be very different among themselves.

What are the barriers and enablers of social participation?

Barriers	Enablers
Low resources	**Education** is a key predictor of broad social engagement
Discrimination	**Discussions about social topics** at an early age are able to decrease low engagement even when resources are low
Those increase/decrease the perceived ability to make a change	
Social exlusion	**Trust** in other people and **local contact** is able to increase political and social engagement
Those increase/decrease the feeling of belonging	

Results based on WP4.4 (analysis of European Value Survey data)
and analysis of own data (WP5)

How is youth participation different?

- Barriers and enablers of youth participation similar to the ones for older people

- However, there is an "**age effect**": for many behaviours, young people are engaged *less* due to their individual life stage and the different time, social and monetary resources available to them (Garcia-Albacete 2014)

- Delayed transition into adulthood due to higher instability within youth (youth unemployment, unpaid/low paid internships, later settling down due to mobility requirements) seems to broaden this age effect (Smeets 2016)

➔Young people´s participation in society is watched particularly closely, as a decline in engagement would be viewed as a threat to democracy

➔ **However, most often *political* participation is looked at, not *social* or *local* forms of engagement. How differently is youth performing in those fields?**

Methods

- Data: Online surveys conducted in 10 PROMISE countries

- Sample: Young people from 15-29 years of age in focus, but also adults

- Analysis of different forms of engagement:

  - **Interest in social, political, environmental matters**

  - **Helping in a local context**

  - **Everyday engagement:** boycott products, donate money, (artistic) statements, internet posting, other ➡ divides by degree of engagement

  - **Activism:** joining unofficial strikes, occupy buildings or factories; attending lawful demonstrations; signing petitions ➡ divides between low activism/ legal activism/ legal and illegal activities

Interest in societal affairs - topics

How interested would you say you are in...

Legend: Not at all · Not very · Somewhat · Very

Categories (top to bottom): social issues (15-29, 30-74), environmental issues (15-29, 30-74), politics (15-29, 30-74). X-axis: percent (0 to 100).
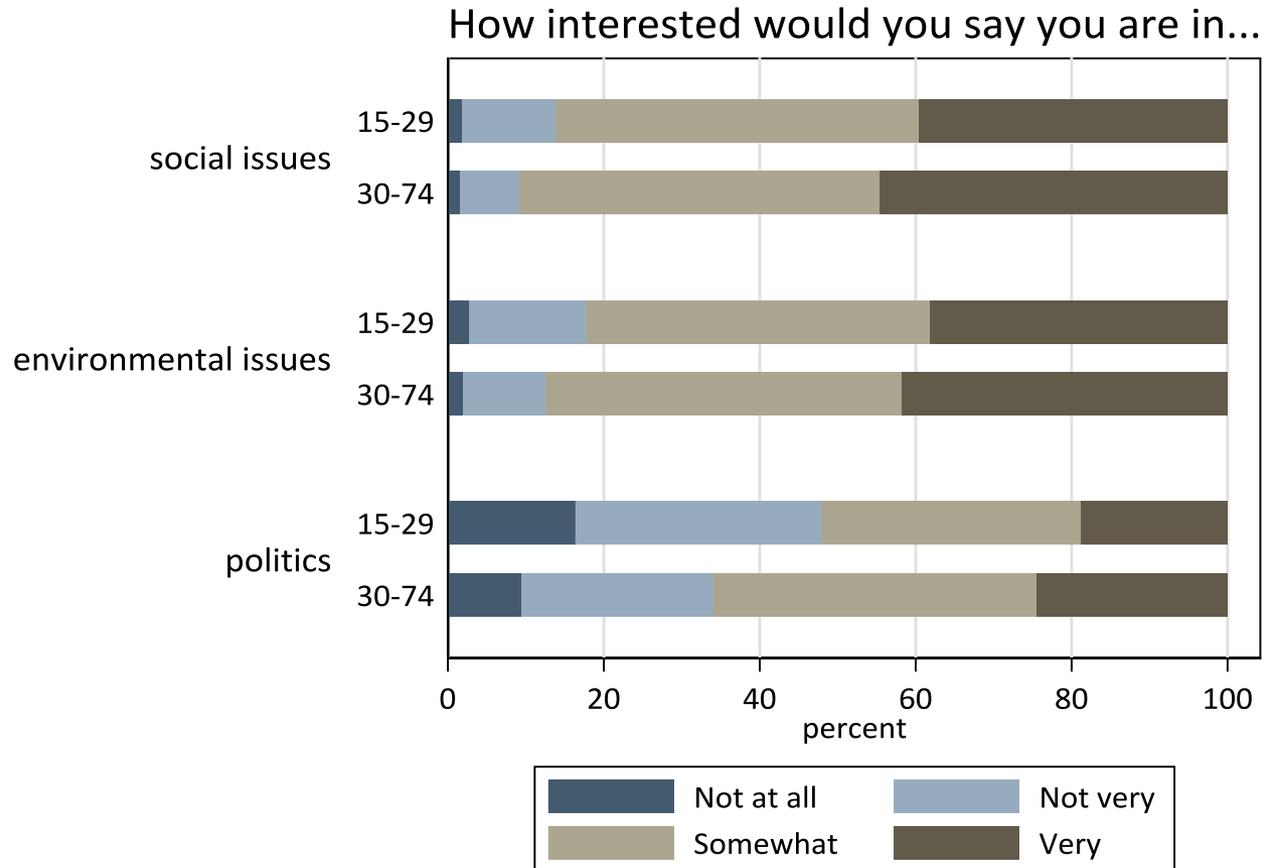
Interest in societal affairs - extent

Interest in social, environmental and political issues
### (3-item index)
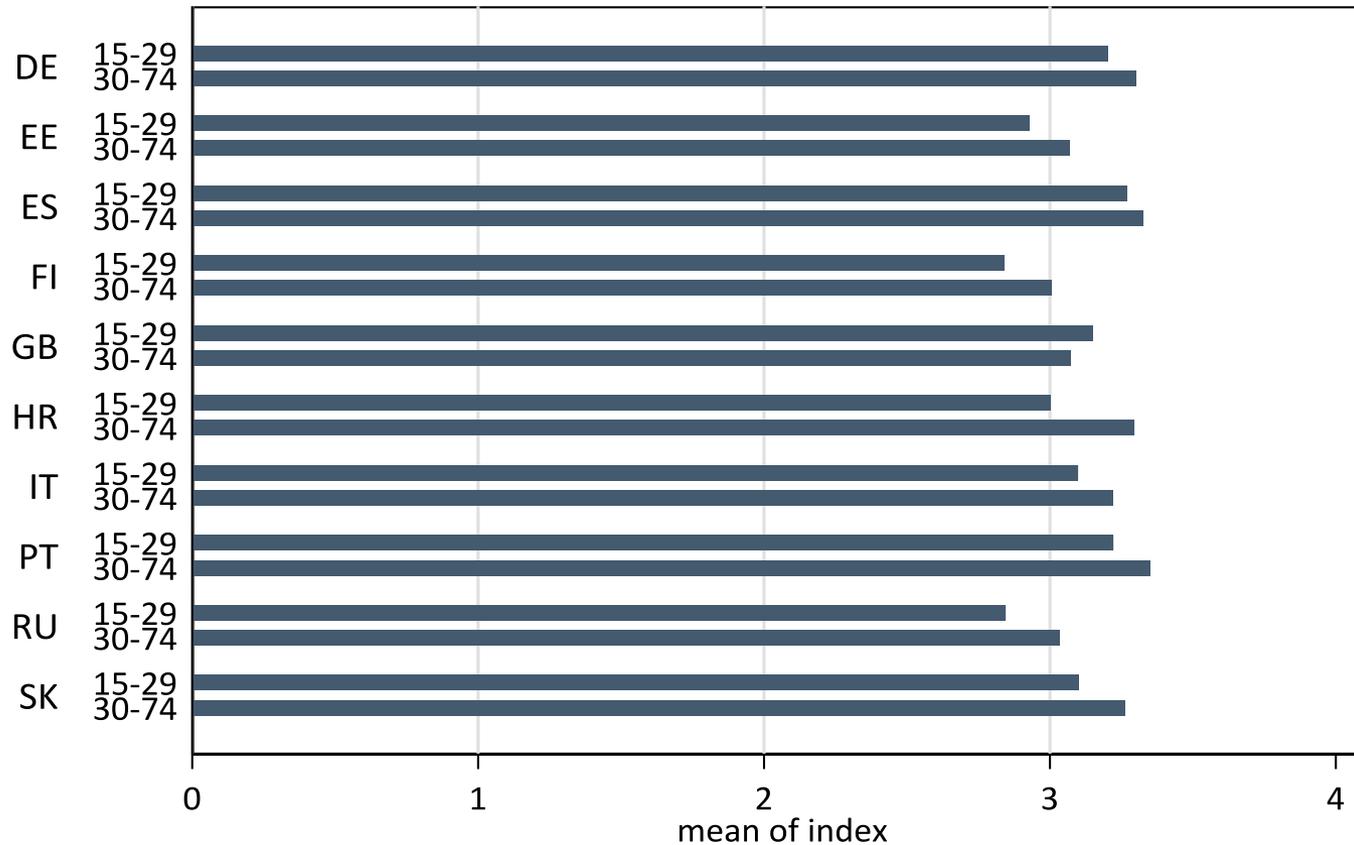
Local involvement - frequency

Helping in a local context
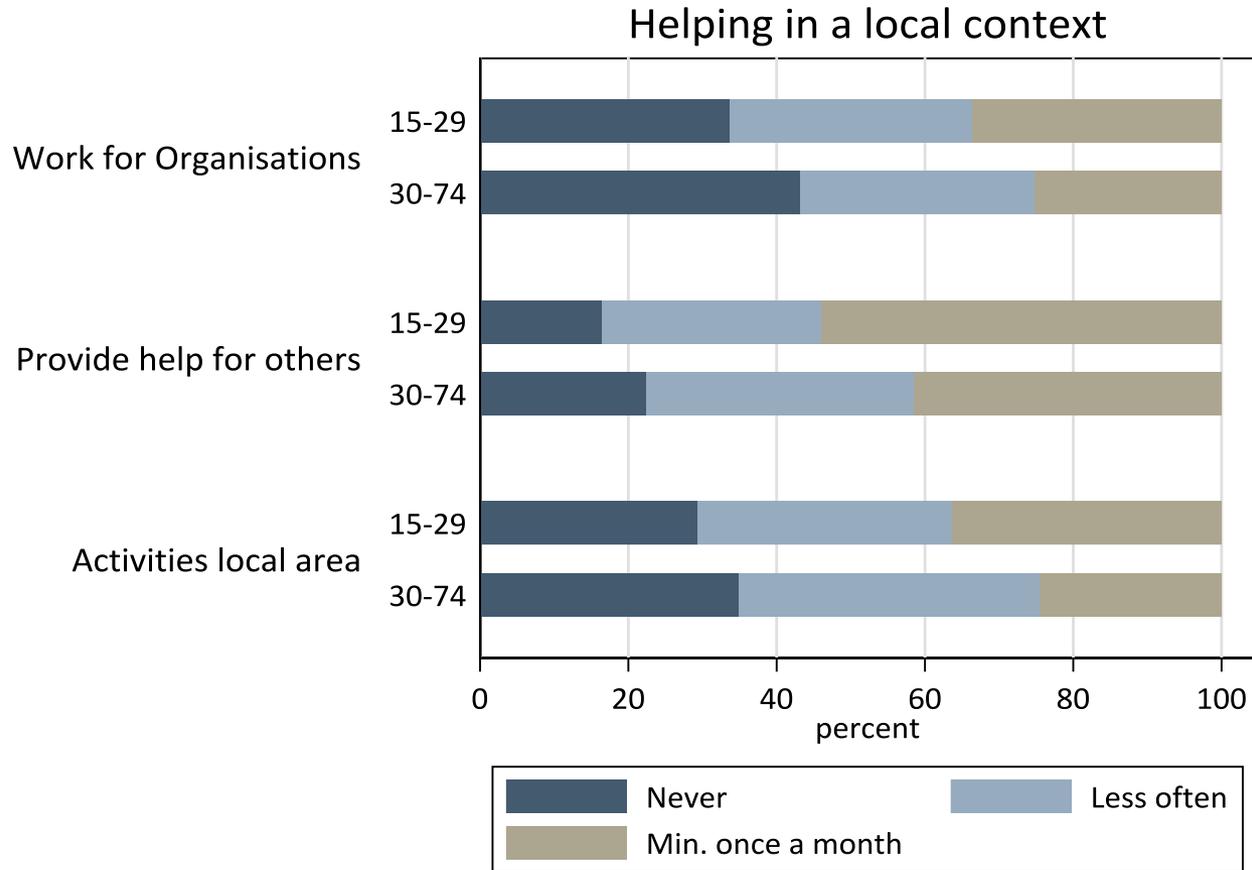
Local involvement - extent

## Helping in a local context (3-item index)
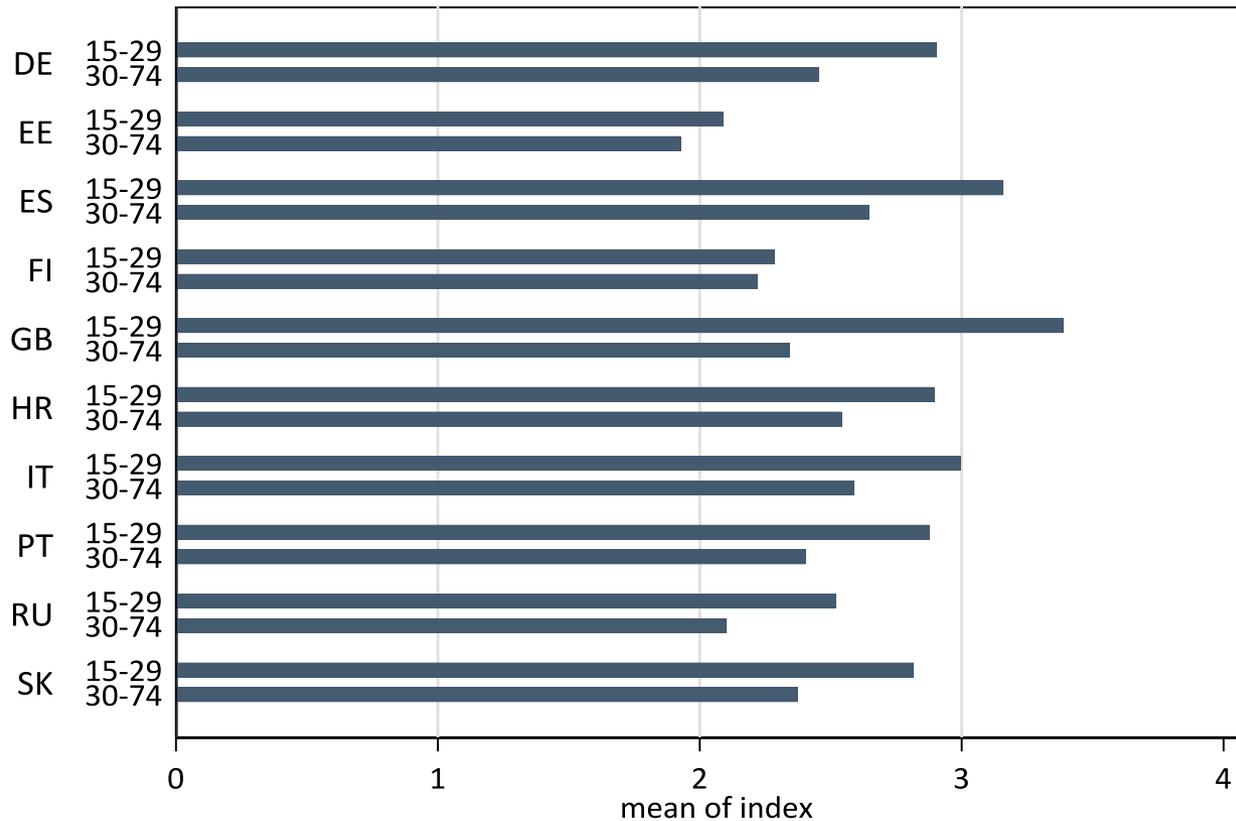
Activism and engagement - willingness

Activism and engagement
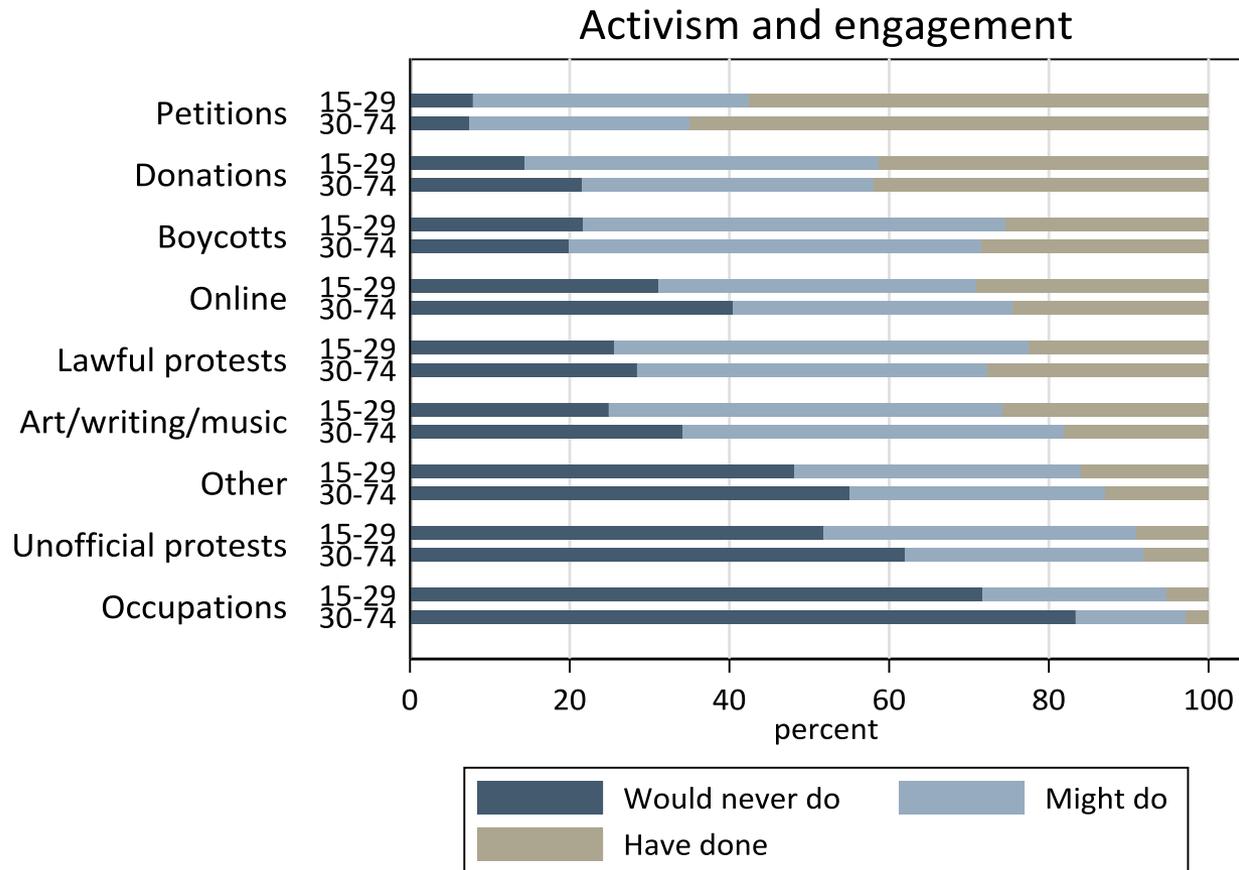
# Everyday engagement classes (*incl. donating, boycotting, art/writing/music, online activities and other*)

Engagement

	Low Engagement	Moderate Engagement	High Engagement
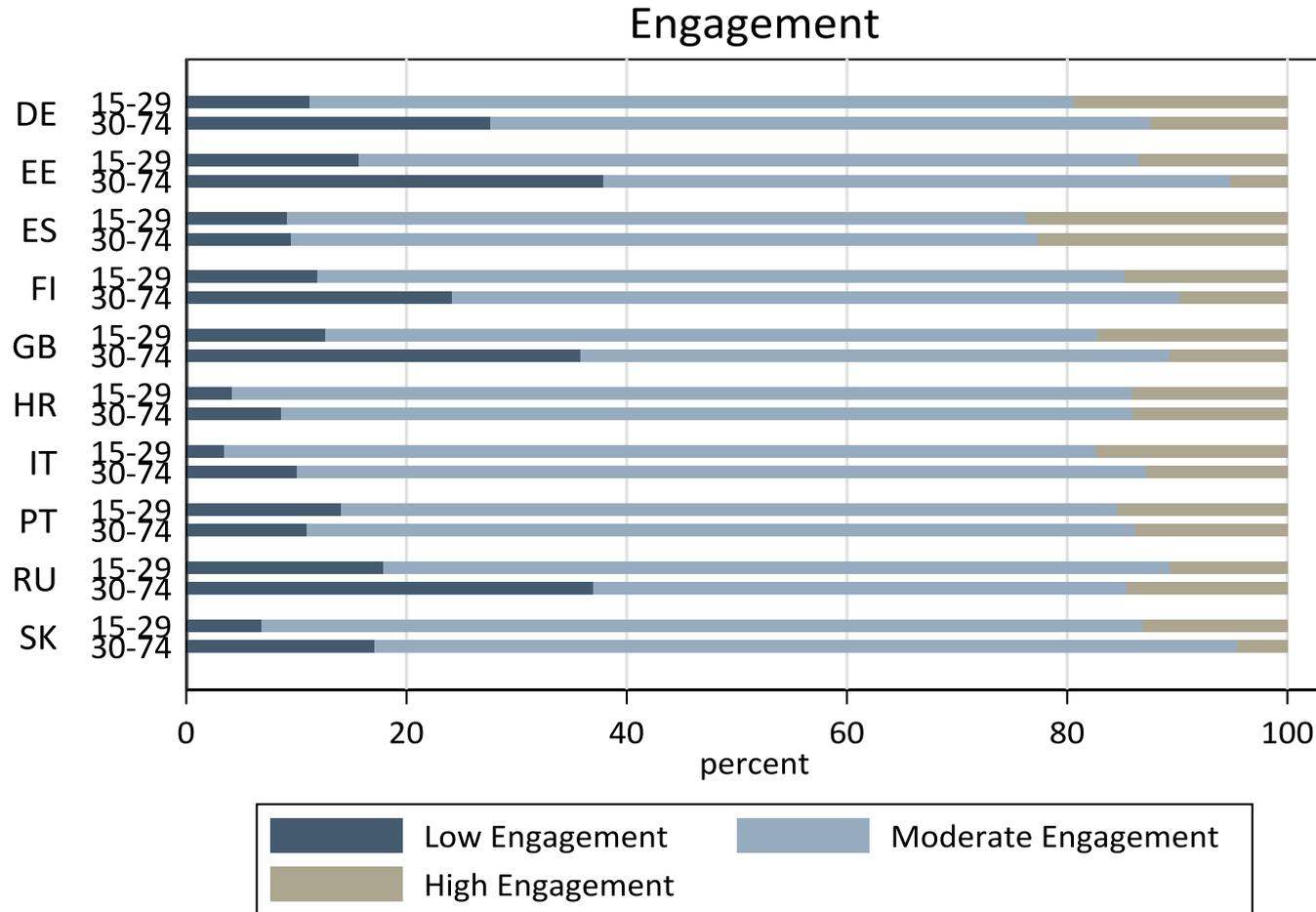
Activism classes (*incl. petitions, demonstrations, illegal demonstrations, squatting*)


Activism
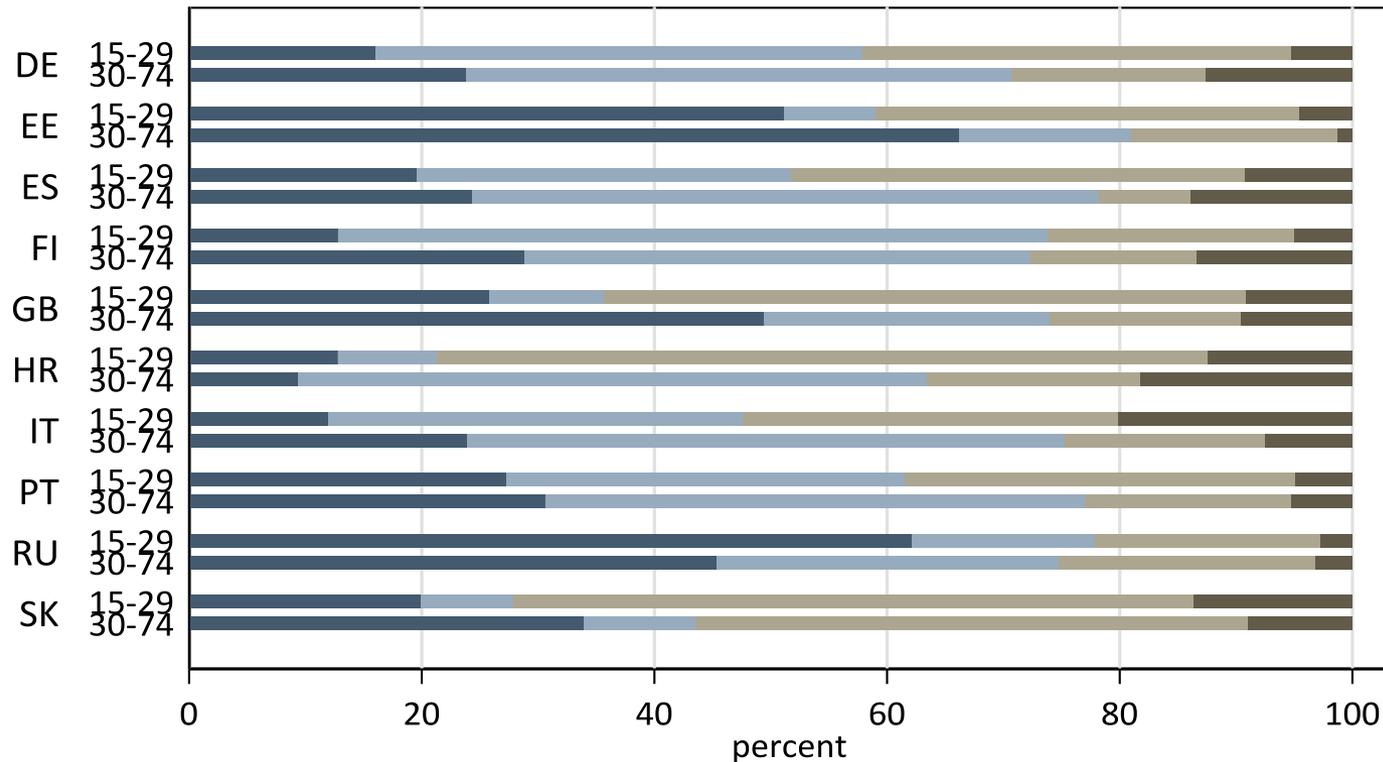
Reasons for social engagement

Issues that made people become active
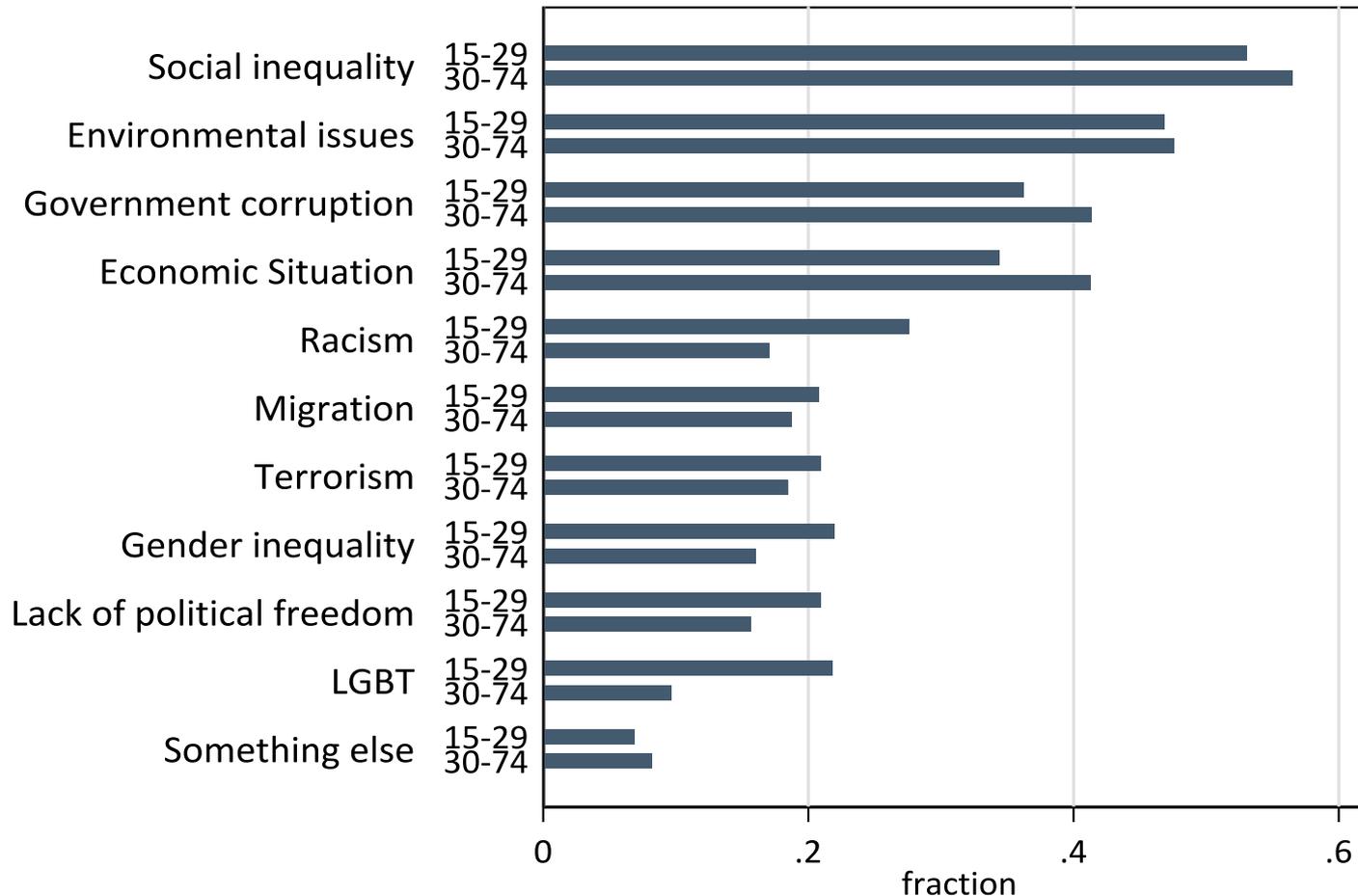
Comparing importance across countries

Issues that made people become active
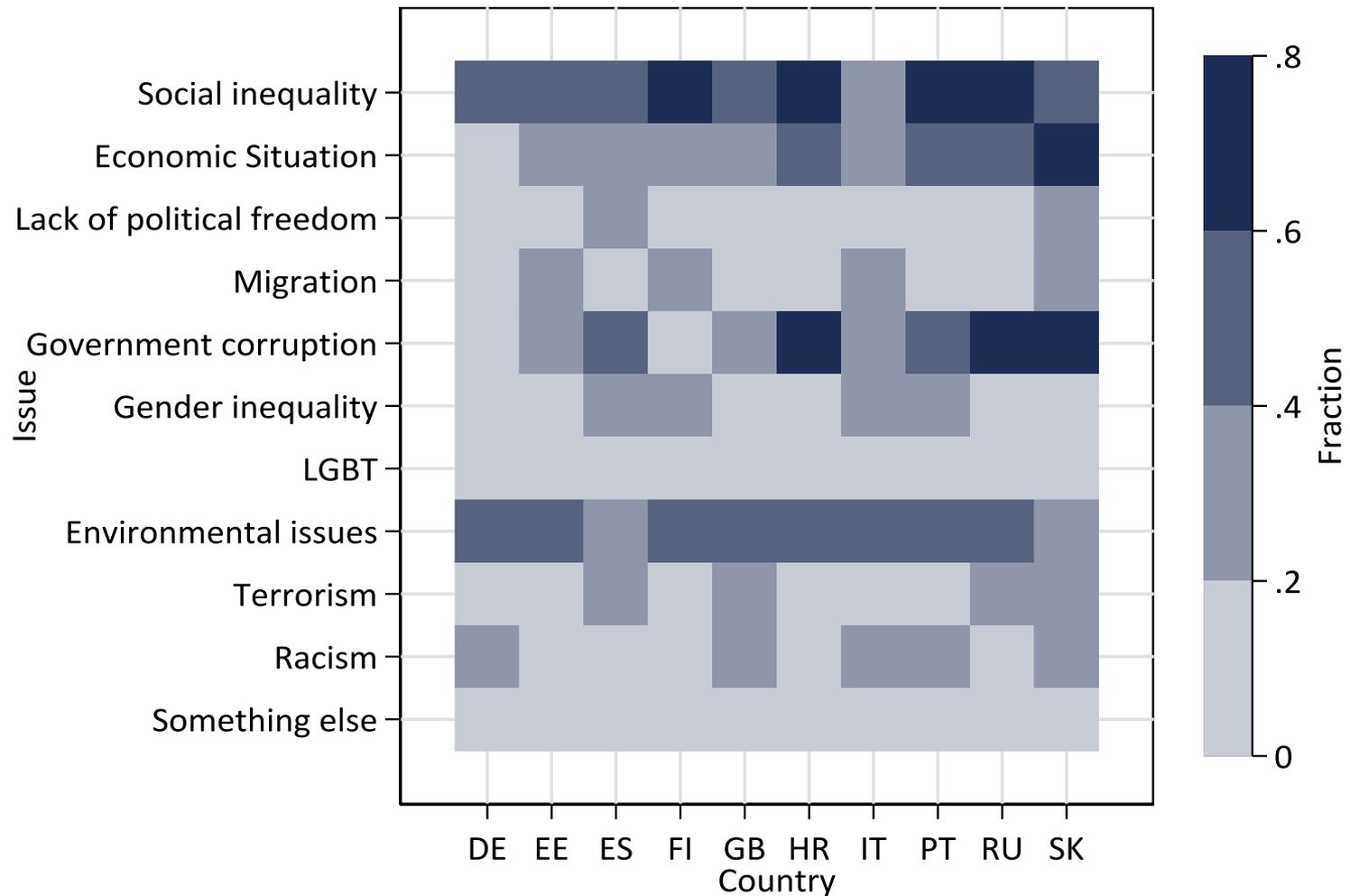
Conclusion

Are young people really that much less engaged?

- Youth are visibly less interested in "politics", but nearly no difference to older generation concerning social and environmental interest
- Much higher engagement on the local area than in formal political activities that require more resources
- Also higher involvement of youth in more radical activism activities and everyday activities, especially creative and online ones
- Racism, gender inequality, LGBT rights and political freedom important topics to the younger generation

➔ **Young people do participate somewhat less in more formal activities. Overall, young people participate to similar degrees as adults, but for different reasons and in different forms.**
They participate even more than adults in local, artistic and online contexts.

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