

PROMISE: Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement: Opportunities and challenges for conflicted young people across Europe.

WP6: From Conflict to Innovation: Ethnographic Case Studies

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Cluster Analysis:

Cluster 2: Culture/politics

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Executive summary:

In this report the results of the meta-ethnographic synthesis of cases in Cluster 2 ('Culture/politics') are summarised. This cluster consists of eight groups of young people from six different countries who either encountered conflict or responded to it in ways that crossed boundaries of culture and politics. In some cases this involved the creation of alternative communities and lifestyles to enact their (aspirations) for political participation. Other groups worked primarily to challenge attitudes, for example to HIV positive people or Muslims. One group responded to its cultural marginalisation mainly through passive rejection; this allowed an interesting comparison of the relative effectiveness of active or passive social response to social subordination. The report organises its findings through the elaboration of 23 concepts derived from the data in response to three research questions. The first focuses on the responses to conflicts the young people experience and the outcomes of those responses. The second addresses the different enabling and inhibiting factors for the social involvement of young people. The third considers the expressions of participation and agency of the conflicted young people in more detail. The findings show that the experience of stigma itself can act as a resource to act and to stimulate social innovation and social change but that resistance does not always lead to destigmatisation but can restigmatise or compound stigmatization. This indicates that young people's agency remains constrained by structural forces; participation is not only about the desire of young people to engage but the willingness of society to open itself to that engagement.

This report should be read in conjunction with the relevant 'General Introduction' document.

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1. Introduction

This cluster brings together case studies proposed by individual teams where young people's responses to conflict or stigmatisation took place primarily in the sphere of culture and politics. While these might be thought of as separate spheres of action, in practice all the groups in this cluster either encountered conflict or responded to it in ways that crossed boundaries of culture and politics by pursuing political objectives through cultural means such as alternative lifestyles, symbolic dress, behaviour, messages, art, theatre (No-TAV, AUT, HIV), by challenging hegemonic culture (SETO, NPCA, AUT) or by seeking political and cultural recognition (SC, HIV, SETO). These practices make it impossible to separate out distinct 'political' and 'cultural' responses. Also included in this Cluster is the case of 'Young Muslim women' (YMW). Although this case is located primarily in the 'Gender/sexuality' cluster, respondents' symbolic practices (such as the wearing of the Muslim headscarf¹) are used to make political and cultural claims to recognition in a similar way to other cases in this cluster. For this reason the case is included in two clusters.

This cluster is the largest cluster including a total of eight cases from six countries (Estonia, Germany, Italy, Russia, Slovakia and the UK). It includes cases of highly active groups creating alternative communities and lifestyles to enact their left-wing, anti-fascist, anti-government or environmental politics such as the No-TAV² movement from Italy, various groups affiliated with the Autonomist movement in Germany, the Not in our Town local political movement (Slovakia) and activists opposed to the government, which is one of the groups associated with new pro-citizen activism in Russia. Other cases might be considered to be more civically and socially, rather than politically, active groups which aim to challenge attitudes, for example, to HIV positive people (HIV activists in Russia) or Muslims (in two cases in Germany and the UK). A number of groups are also involved in targeted political or social activism, for example the pro-moral order activists in Russia campaign, and use direct action, against alcohol, drug use and advertising while the young Muslims in the 'Suspect Communities' case protest against elements of UK counter-terrorism policy and practice. Finally, one group – youth from the Seto heritage region – reject their social subordination as a result of the dominant cultural politics of the region in a largely non-active way. These similarities and differences between cases are reflected in the presentation of the findings of the synthesis set out below, as is the tendency for the SETO case study to be most frequently included as part of a refutational, as opposed to reciprocal, synthesis³ of the data. Nonetheless the findings of the SETO case remain pertinent to this cluster precisely in that they show a different response to similar encounters with conflict.

¹ Respondents in this study wore a range of different styles of hijab (veil), which covered their head and neck, but not their face. For this reason, we use the generic term 'Muslim headscarf' to indicate head coverings worn by respondents.

² A brief description of each group and the acronyms used to identify them are found in Table 1.

³ For an explanation of the meta-ethnographic synthesis approach to data analysis, see the Introduction to this deliverable.

2. Scope of the data synthesised

As noted above, Cluster 2 is a relatively heterogeneous cluster of cases. Below a brief profile of each case in the cluster is provided; further explanation of the nature of the group as well as the research findings for that case can be found at: <http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/ethnographic-case-studies/>

Autonomists (AUT): This case consists of a heterogeneous extreme-left youth scene active in a number of cities in Germany. Its members are in conflict with the political and economic order and are overtly politically engaged in protesting against this order. As a result they experience significant criminalisation and stigmatisation.

HIV activists (HIV): This case includes young people – many HIV positive themselves – who are engaged in emergent HIV activist scenes in two Russian cities (St Petersburg and Kazan). These activists work in the context of a highly moralising public discourse about HIV, high levels of social stigmatisation of those living with the illness and legal constraints on the functioning of civil society organisations.

New pro-citizen activism (NPCA): This case consists of youth active in St Petersburg in two broad civil society movements; ‘oppositional’ and ‘moral order’ activism. The former support a liberal, progressive opposition to the Russian government. The latter conduct culturally conservative campaigns for ‘moral order’. While active at opposite ends of the political spectrum, young people in both movements are in ‘conflict’ with the current political authorities in Russia and subject to hostility and abuse from the media and the general public.

No-TAV (No-TAV): This case consists of young people participating in the No-TAV movement, which opposes the construction of a high-speed railway between France and Italy. In public discourse No-TAV activists are represented as anti-progress ‘primitives’, Nimbies or, in the case of young people, as terrorists, Black Blocs or professional orchestrators of violence.

Not in Our Town (NIOT): This case consists of young people participating in a grassroots movement in the city of Banská Bystrica in Slovakia. The movement emerged locally to fight against the election of an extreme right wing regional governor but is active in resisting racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance more widely in the context of rapid social change in Slovakia.

Rural youth in Seto heritage region (SETO): This case consists of young people in the Seto ethnic region in South Eastern Estonia who experience stigmatisation resulting from their lack of recognised cultural identity in a newly emerged, hegemonically Seto-heritage oriented region. Their consequent disengagement results in negative stereotyping as ‘passive’ by authorities, media and the general public.

Youth mobilisations of ‘suspect communities’ (SC): This case comprises young people who are Muslim or of Muslim heritage and actively engaged in countering misrecognition and stigmatisation of Muslims in the contemporary UK. A particular issue of contention – and protest – for them is UK counter-terrorism legislation (specifically the ‘Prevent’ duty). This policy is experienced as part of a wider securitisation of society that has contributed to the construction of Muslim populations as ‘suspect communities’.

Young Muslim women: Social engagement of devout young female Muslims (YMW): This case brings together individual young Muslim women in Germany who, as ‘representatives of Islam’ are subject to, gendered, assumptions about an essentialised collective Muslim identity. Contrary to these stereotypes, the young women are all actively engaged in society and choose to be so as visible Muslims – symbolised by their choice to wear the Muslim headscarf.

The data included in the synthesis analysis consisted of three sources: thematic ‘node memos’; individual ‘respondent memos’; and the individual case study final reports. Descriptions of the content and format of ‘node memos’ and ‘respondent memos’ can be found in the Introduction to this deliverable. The full texts of all the case study final reports can be found at: <http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/ethnographic-case-studies/>. As noted above, Cluster 2 is the largest of the clusters. A total of 152 interviews were conducted (across the eight cases) with data coded to almost 1,500 individual codes (Level 1 nodes). This coded data was organised into a total of 183 ‘node memos’ (summarizing the data for each ‘family’ or ‘Level 2’ node. The scope and size of the data set synthesized for this cluster of cases is detailed in Table 1 (below).

Table 1: Scope of the data synthesised

Case studies	No. respondents	No. Level 2 nodes	No. Level 1 nodes
Autonomists (AUT, DE)	22	24	201
HIV activists (HIV, RU)	26	33	202
No-TAV (No-TAV, IT)	20	17	92
Not In Our Town (NIOT, SK)	19	15	152
New pro-citizen activism (NPCA, RU)	29	23	120
Rural youth in Seto heritage region (SETO, EE)	20	17	208
Youth mobilisations of ‘suspect communities’ (SC, GB)	27	28	287
Young Muslim women (YMW, DE)	15	26	236
Total	152	183	1498

The research questions derived to guide the synthesis of data in Cluster 2 are:

Q.1: How do young people respond to conflicts they experience and with what outcomes?

Q.2: What enables and what inhibits the social involvement of young people?

Q.3 (Cluster-specific question): How are (aspirations for) (political) participation and (political) agency expressed by conflicted young people?

Reflections on the synthesis process are outlined in general in the Introduction to this deliverable. With specific relation to Cluster 2, notwithstanding the heterogeneous nature

of the cases, and their diverse cultural contexts, reciprocal syntheses were possible for all three questions addressed in the cluster analysis. However, a number of cases provided partially refutational or refutational data and thus the concepts derived note where this is the case. The line of argument synthesis allows for these refutational cases to be taken into account in interpreting the synthesized data.

3. Key Findings

The key findings of the cluster analysis are presented below in three sections corresponding to each of the questions addressed. After a brief overview of the analysis for each question, the concepts derived from the synthesis of data related to the respective questions are presented in detail.

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

This question addresses two key dimensions of the PROMISE study: how young people who are in conflict or stigmatised respond to their situations; and what the outcomes of those responses are. It is crucial to capture both these dimensions of the study, while analytically separating them, because the relationship between conflict/stigmatisation is complex and multidirectional. By this we mean that conflict/stigmatisation may arise from the initial positioning of members of the group due to biographical factors and life situations (e.g. age, race, sexuality or area of residence) or as a result of young people's responses to their situations (e.g. anti-social behaviour or joining an activist group that sits outside social norms). Respondents may also experience both kinds of conflict or that their response to initial, more diffuse, stigmatisation compounds, re-embeds or institutionalises such conflict.

The initial reciprocal synthesis of concepts for this question generated seven concepts for each of these two dimensions of the question (14 concepts in total). This number was reduced to a final total of seven by developing line of argument rather than exclusively reciprocal or refutational syntheses and excluding any concepts where no reciprocal or refutational translation was possible for more than one case. The final seven concepts derived from the findings discussed below are:

Responses to conflicts and stigmatisation experienced:

- ❖ challenging attitudes;
- ❖ doing something;
- ❖ seeking/living an alternative.

Outcomes of those responses:

- ❖ creating community;
- ❖ de/re-stigmatisation;
- ❖ (dis)empowerment;
- ❖ social change.

3.1.1 Response to conflict: Challenging attitudes

The most consistent response to stigmatisation or conflict – found across all groups in the cluster – was to *challenge* the attitudes, prejudices, negative assumptions or stereotypes encountered. In most cases these attitudes were directed towards the individuals, or the groups to which the respondents belonged (No-TAV, NPCA) or were perceived to belong to ('Muslims' in the case of SC and YMW). However, in some cases, the prejudices related to people the groups sought to support, for example those living with HIV (HIV) or 'left-wing friends' (AUT). Most findings confirmed a reciprocal synthesis of data was possible, that is, 'challenging attitudes' expressed how young people across all the groups in the study responded to conflict and stigmatisation experienced. However, some refutational statements from individuals within some cases were found and these are noted below.

Challenging neo-Nazi or right wing messages is the core activity of two groups in this cluster: the Autonomists; and the NIOT movement. These challenges take place online, for example Emil (AUT, DE) explains how he monitors communication by extreme right groups online and reports anything he understands to be prohibited under the German Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG). Activists in both the Autonomists and NIOT also directly engage with individuals making extreme right comments online with the aim of changing their opinions (Emil, AUT, DE; Jay, NIOT, SK). Challenges also take place on the street. Activists in the Autonomists groups are engaged in a symbolic civil war as they first remove 'Nazi propaganda, such as swastikas daubed all over the place or different kinds of right-wing stickers' and replace it with 'our stuff' in the form of street art (Bernd, AUT, DE) (see Plate 1). Symbolic battle can take a more direct form in clashes over the occupation of city spaces to deliver activist messages. For example, on hearing that the far right NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* – National Democratic Party of Germany) had set up an info-table in the city centre, Peter had mobilised a group of 'Against Racism' activists who gave away litter bags to passers-by so that people who took the NPD material 'could throw it away immediately' (Peter, AUT, DE). At large demonstrations (such as the G20 in Hamburg, 2017) this posturing became a game of 'muscle-flexing on both sides' (Gustav, AUT, DE).



Plate 1: Graffiti against Nazis (permission to use this photo was granted by the photographer, a member of the activist group)

For two other groups in this cluster - the 'young Muslim women' and the mobilisations of 'suspect communities' - it is the negative representations and perceptions of minority groups that they seek to challenge. They did this by engaging in dialogue with non-Muslims to demonstrate that Muslims were 'just normal people' (Khaled, SC, GB) and both internally diverse as a group as well as different from media portrayals:

I like spreading Islam and showing we are different. It is really, really important to me to show that we are different to what they show in the media, and that we are not like those weird bearded brothers with the long dress, who are running around shouting at people. (Necla, YMW, DE)

Interviewees felt that people who have no contact with practising Muslims are particularly susceptible to media stereotyping of Muslims and, by engaging in personal encounters with non-Muslims, these prejudices could be confronted. To this end, respondents in the YMW case took part in a Europe-wide action called 'I'm Muslim, pleased to meet you' in which young Muslims handed out roses and flyers to passers-by.

A critical dimension of the responses to stigmatisation among both the YMW and SC case studies is that through their activities they seek not only to challenge negative attitudes but demonstrate their desire and willingness to be full and active members of society and polity. As Morsal (YMW, DE) puts it, 'we Muslims [...] can make great use out of what God has given us. I mean, for society'. Indeed, the stigmatisation or misrecognition of young Muslims may drive the desire to be active citizens:

[...] for many second generation immigrants who are Muslims, being proud of the religion came into play even more as a result of the amount the religion was

attacked. So as a result of the war on terror, as a result of growing Islamophobia and institutional Islamophobia and the persecution of Muslims and anti-Muslim rhetoric in the UK, many young Muslims immediately, like, came to the defences of Islam and immediately sort of became one of those front voices in the fight back against anti-Muslim rhetoric. (Zuhair, SC, GB)

In this sense feeling misrecognised – as ‘suspect communities’⁴ in this case - is reformulated as the basis for social activism or resistance (Honneth, 1995: 163). In both these case studies, such active citizenship extends to participation in demonstrations or rallies (such as pro-Palestine, free Kurdistan, ‘don’t bomb Syria’ or Black Lives Matter). However, as discussed below (see Section 3.1.2) such social activism is less integral to their strategy of challenging attitudes than ‘doing good deeds’.

As with the case studies of young Muslims, the HIV activists engage in protests – for example calling for pharmaceutical companies to reduce the price of antiretroviral therapy – and use direct personal interaction to challenge stereotypes. However, while in the case of the two Muslim groups, challenging attitudes was a way of claiming equal right to recognition, in the HIV activist case study, such challenges necessitated a visceral engagement with unpicking stigma. In organising a marathon race, for example, activists were confronted with concerns that one of the HIV positive participants might pass contaminated bodily fluids to others through ‘vomit’ or ‘sweat’ (Alexander, HIV, RU). On another occasion – at a training observed by the researcher - an activist took direct action to calm fears expressed by a student that contact with people living with HIV would be dangerous for her (because she had open sores on her hands); the activist simply placed the student’s hand on her own (HIV, Field diary, 10 March, 2017, RU). The HIV activists also challenged institutional discrimination against people living with HIV by holding conferences and training seminars for representatives of medical, educational, and social institutions and providing information to aid prevention – including access to testing and counselling services – from mobile buses in the city (see Plate 2).

⁴ A ‘suspect community’ is a group of people (identified by an ethnic, religious, racial, national or other marker) who are ‘constructed as “suspects” by mechanisms deployed by the state to ensure national or state “security” and reinforced by societal responses and social practices’ (Breen-Smyth, 2014: 231-2).



Plate 2: Testing for HIV and distribution of condoms by HIV activists in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan. Photo made by the PROMISE researcher.

NIOT activists were also involved in fighting ‘against the existing stereotypes in society’ (M.D., NIOT, SK) through participation in a ‘living libraries’ project that introduced students to representatives of communities who were widely negatively portrayed including members of the Roma and Jewish communities, former drug addicts and right wing extremists (Z.S., NIOT, SK). Activists from one of the sub-groups (opposition activists) of the new pro-citizen activism (NPCA) case study also sought to challenge stereotypes by opening up ‘taboo’ topics - gender equality, feminism, sexism, domestic violence and LGBT rights - for discussion (Sonya, Platon, NPCA, RU). Activists from the other sub-group (public morality activists) challenged stigmatisation of themselves as ‘backward people’ (Natasha, NPCA, RU) for promoting a healthy lifestyle. Activists in the No-TAV movement found themselves similarly portrayed as ‘primitives’ for opposing the high-tech new railway and felt they had to explain their activism to counter attitudes among the public that people in the Susa Valley ‘are crazy’ (Francesca, No-TAV, IT).

While the ‘challenging attitudes’ concept emerges out of a relatively robust reciprocal synthesis, some respondents felt unable to challenge attitudes, prejudices or stereotypes. This is most extensively expressed in the case of non-Seto young people in the Seto region who felt culturally marginalised in an environment where traditional Seto culture was heavily promoted by the local authorities. Younger respondents, especially, avoided directly confronting negative attitudes towards them, opting instead to passively distance themselves from cultural events in which they felt marginal. Even those, older, respondents

who had previously actively tried to resist the imposition of Seto cultural hegemony declared that they ‘could not be bothered anymore’ (Erki, SETO, EE) since everybody knew ‘nothing will change’ (Indrek, SETO, EE). Thus, in an environment where they felt excluded from the cultural opportunities available, these young people spent their free time ‘hanging out’ or planning ‘getaways’ and travel away from the region to various leisure centres. While, arguably, ‘doing nothing’ is itself a form of subcultural resistance (Corrigan, 1993, 103), the outcome of this response (as discussed below) is the further marginalisation of these young people as they become entrenched in an inferior position in the social hierarchy of the region. This has led many to leave the region altogether (Riina, SETO, EE) and left those who had not feeling like ‘the only fool who stayed’ (Marko, SETO, EE).

In the case of the two case studies of Muslim youth – where active challenging of negative stereotypes is integral to their activism – there are also constraints on respondents’ ability to challenge attitudes. This is evident from the fact that respondents sometimes just ‘laugh off’ racist language or jokes (Dmitri, SC, GB; Ruksana, SC, GB) or ‘get used to’ negative comments (Morsal, YMW, DE). While this is a strategy used by many to avoid daily conflict, respondents in both the YMW and SC case studies recognised the danger that such negative discourse would become internalised and young Muslims’ activism would be reduced to ‘explaining Islam’ to its critics rather than engaging in their own, positive political agenda. Respondents recognise these moments of ‘choice’ when they recall moments when they had ‘bitten their tongue’ even though they knew they should have challenged something. Fiza, for example, describes an occasion when her white English neighbour congratulated her for doing well ‘for somebody from *her* [author’s italics] community’:

I should have said something to her there and then, but I didn't. But then now when I think about the story - and I tell that story a lot - I just think, 'What women in my community is she talking about?' She lives down the road from me. She is my community. (Fiza, SC, GB)

Such encounters lead respondents to understand that the integration of Muslims is not welcomed and that they will always be constructed as ‘others’ who are incapable of integrating regardless of their own actions. Serpil (YMW, DE) also recognises that young people cannot exercise their agency in conditions of their own making. It is not only up to individuals to seek to engage but society must be open enough to accept that contribution:

If the society and its structures do not open, I cannot do anything. That's why I said I do not like integration. I am integrated. But I want to participate. So society has to open itself. (Serpil, YMW, DE)

These ‘refutational’ examples, allow us to begin to develop a line of argument that young people respond to stigmatisation or misrecognition by challenging the negative attitudes and perceptions of them that they encounter. However, direct, interpersonal challenges cannot tackle the structural or institutionally embedded dimension of their positioning. The attaching of labels or stereotypes – whether we experience, or understand, these as either stigmatisation or misrecognition – involves not only the depreciation of group identity but a form of social subordination that is the product of ‘institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute one as relatively unworthy of respect or esteem’ (Fraser, 2008: 84) and that has ‘serious discriminatory consequences’ (Link and Phelan, 2001: 376) including the denial of opportunity to participate equally in social life (Fraser, 2008: 84).

3.1.2 Response to conflict: Doing something

A response to stigmatisation or conflict found across all cases in this cluster was the impulse to 'do something'. This report does not detail the range of activities engaged in by respondents (for this see individual case study reports at: <http://www.promise.manchester.ac.uk/en/ethnographic-case-studies/>) but rather uses the synthesis of cases to explore the meanings attached to 'doing something' across different cases.

The most prevalent narrative – albeit articulated differently from case to case – is the sense that 'doing something' is doing the 'right thing'. This is particularly clearly expressed among those case studies where there is a strong ideological mission (AUT, No-TAV, NIOT, NPCA). For NIOT activists, for example, the imperative is to encourage young people to engage in politics 'and not only shrug your shoulders and tell yourself that nothing is happening' (A.C., NIOT, SK). For the Autonomists too, it is important to know that you have tried to make a difference:

Some day when I'm old and someone asks me: 'Well, what did you do there?', I don't just want to say I read the papers and got a bit wound up. I want to be able to say: 'Yeah, I just went onto the street.' And at least be able to say: 'I gave everything I could' [...] did as much as anybody could to try and somehow change it or at least to say that I don't agree with it, even if it was most likely not to change anything. (Lothar, AUT, DE)

However, 'doing something' is an achievement also in cases where activists have more 'pragmatic' aims; if activists manage to 'get access to services for as many people as possible', according to Ruslan (HIV, RU) then 'we have done something'. Even culturally marginalised young people in Seto, who, as we saw in Section 3.1.1, are most likely to respond to stigmatisation with passive rejection, recounted how, 'at some point we protested about that skate [park] [...] and now they are building it' (Nelli, SETO, EE).

For new pro-citizen activists, it is precisely opposing passivity that is 'the right thing' to do. Both the sub-groups in this case study – despite their very different political positions – talk about the importance of doing small things for the good of society. They advocate going out onto the street to address the social problems you see rather than being 'armchair warriors'.

I am like a crusader. I have my sins and I, you know... do good in order to cleanse myself of these sins. Well, not really 'do good', not for everyone, but still. For me it's like a way of washing away my sins and showing that I can do something, something useful. (Denis, NPCA, RU)

For Necla (MYW) too 'sins are extinguished' by acts of charity. Undertaking visible charity work or volunteering, community engagement and mentoring and coaching young people was seen as a way to dispel stereotypes and change perceptions of Muslims. 'Giving back to your community', as Yardan (SC, GB) put it, 'helps dispel a lot of these stereotypes [...] because they would know a Muslim who's, who's been helping them'. Khaled refers to this as 'indirect *Dawa*' (Khaled, SC). However, involvement in acts of charity is deeply rooted in Islamic traditions and many respondents talked about having grown up watching family

members engage in such work. ‘Doing good deeds’ brings personal salvation (or blessings) and was viewed as part of living a life in a way that is pleasing to God: ‘[our] prophet says the best person of all is [...] the one who is most useful to others’ (Emine, YMW, DE). However, Muslim respondents are also clear that these are not private acts between you and your God but social contributions. Doing ‘good deeds’ is very much about ‘doing something’ to make society better:

My goal is, to achieve with my activities [...] to make a contribution to society. So that we are a society that is more open towards each other, and also that you somehow foster this cohesion. [...] I think it really important that [...] I make a contribution myself, say ‘I want society to be like that.’ But I should not only say this, but actually do something. Whether it is with my poetry, or with what I do in the [mosque] community, [or any other of my activities]. (Reyhan, YMW, DE)

This kind of moral or ethical texture to everyday political and social participation has been identified among other groups of young people. Manning’s (2013) study of young Australians found they understood and enacted politics not in traditional, ideologically driven ways but through micro political practice driven by individual constellations of ethical and moral issues.

A particular sub narrative encountered among these cases is the suggestion that the impulse to ‘do something’ stems from the very stigmatisation or marginalisation that respondents experience. Igor (HIV, RU) describes how his own HIV activism began after discovering his own HIV positive status while Borya (NPCA, RU) became involved in LGBT activism after he realised he was bisexual. Among young people in the ‘suspect communities’ case study, respondents noted that, in their experience, activists are often people who come from marginalised communities because they, naturally, want to change things. No-TAV activists talk about inheriting from the movement the idea of social engagement but also how the conflicts and oppositions they experience themselves motivate them to act. For Clara (No-TAV) it was ‘the unfairness behind the things happening to these people’ that encouraged her to become socially involved. In the case of the Autonomists this experience of conflict and stigmatisation was vicarious; they were motivated by awareness of how others (their left-wing friend) were targeted by right-wing groups (Bernd, AUT, DE)

This subnarrative may appear to challenge existing research which suggests that a range of forms of social inequality (based on gender, ethnicity, class, education etc.) are likely to *reduce* political participation among young people and may substantiate arguments that ‘new grammars of action’ (O’Toole and Gale, 2010) are emerging, for example, among ethnic minority youth. However, and without pre-empting the findings reported in Section 3.1.5 below, it is important to explore how this agency on the part of young people impacts – or not – on the structures it seeks to change. One respondent herself notes how counter-terrorism legislation in the UK that young people in the SC case experienced as stigmatising (through its targeting of the Muslim community) had ‘been able to mobilise hundreds of student activists across the country’ but, at the same time, had ‘made people very conscious of the Muslims around them’ and led to intensified scrutiny (Meena, SC, GB). Building our line of argument, therefore, we see here also that while the structures that subordinate do not prevent young people ‘doing something’, the institutional response may not be to yield or respond positively but to actually re-embed the stigma or misrecognition young people’s action seeks to counter.

3.1.3 Response to conflict: Living/seeking an alternative (outside the system)

The third concept that includes all cases in this cluster reflects a response to stigmatisation and conflict that seeks, and in some cases enacts, an alternative way of living. This alternative varies across cases in the degree to which it is extra-systemic or 'radical' and whether the alternative way of life constitutes a response to pre-existing conflict/stigmatisation or whether conflict has been encountered as a result of seeking to enact that alternative.

Young people from the Autonomists and No-TAV case studies exemplify this response to conflict; for them alternative living is an everyday experience and central to their movements' aims and objectives. It follows that it is among these two groups of young people that we find the strongest forms of solidarity and sense of community (see Section 3.1.4), which are both a product of this alternative way of living and an essential condition for it. For the Autonomists, the establishment and maintenance of their own infrastructure is central to their mission to fight the capitalist system. This includes alternative living in vehicles, the occupation of houses, factory sites and properties and the fight against urban house-building policies and gentrification. Squatted houses provide an alternative to conventional ways of living and some respondents were living, or had lived, in trailers and/or were actively engaged in promoting this alternative way of life. This was not without cost; Anton (AUT, DE) noted that 'I am risking being sued for criminal damage or trespassing, just to keep up the squatted area for the trailers'. The autonomist alternative includes also self-administration and self-reliance in terms of production and distribution (DIY), organisation of events, cultural programmes and legal and technical support.

The basic principles that we follow are pro do-it-yourself, pro-solidarity and the pursuit of openness in the sense of participation from outside. [These] are things we strive for and encourage. Anti-capitalist, cost-covering economic activity, anti-profit driven, ecologically sustainable. (Frauke, AUT, DE)

The No-TAV movement also lives as far as possible outside 'the system'. The movement, Alice states was born out of this conflict with the state:

What brought the movement into being was policemen beating up some elders, beating up people that I knew or that we knew anyway. [...] These things upset you. What has he done to be beaten up!? And that's when it started to grow. It has become a fight against the State, which is guilty of interference and injustices against people. (Alice, No-TAV, IT)

The movement is experienced as 'a way of living, a way of thinking' (Pamela, No-TAV, IT) including ensuring that consumption is conducted in a way that respects workers' rights and dignity and does minimal harm to the environment.

In the case of new pro-citizen activists, the sub-group of moral order activists see themselves as 'revolutionaries' who aim to transform the existing moral order. Even if, in practical terms the interventions they make are highly localised (removal of advertisements for sex workers at bus stops, campaigns against smoking in public places) they are seen as liberating 'ordinary' people from the oppression of an indecent moral order. The study of culturally excluded youth in Seto region also revealed some small-scale attempts to create an alternative cultural space. At one Seto village event attended by the researcher, a group

of young people, frustrated by the Seto folk music and costumes, attempted to create their own alternative musical environment by playing pop music from a CD-player. The attempt failed and the interlopers were ‘sung off’ the field by the approved *leelo*⁵ singers leaving one respondent feeling like he wanted to ‘kick someone so bad’ (Indrek, SETO, EE). Other acts of frustration with the officially promoted folk Seto culture scene included tearing down or defacing advertisements for Seto events in the village and gate crashing events.

HIV activists also focus not on grand revolutionary change but creating an alternative infrastructure that can circumvent the shortages and bureaucratic procedures of the official health system. This is done through the creation of ‘first aid kits’ out of left-over medicines, which are made available in emergency situations for others.

Yesterday a guy came, he had moved house, and he had had the same therapy for five years. He said, ‘Damn it, I moved from one apartment to another and put the medicines in some packet and lost them. And I don’t know where they are now.’ He hadn’t had any medication for 25 days. I said, ‘Well, of course, we’ll help you now.’ Soon we found everything. All by ourselves. (Arthur, HIV, RU)

In two cases - the two case studies of Muslim youth – the data do not support the anti-system and pro-alternative living narrative at the heart of this concept. This is probably explained by the fact that, in contrast to the Autonomists and No-TAV groups, members of these groups feel unrecognised as citizens or social actors of equal worth (Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1995); this makes the struggle for recognition by state and civil institutions a battle to be won before those institutions can be resisted or a radical alternative to them proposed. This non-recognition, or misrecognition⁶, as a particular form of stigmatisation, takes away the space for young Muslims to be radical in their social activism. That young Muslims were denied the space to have ‘radical’ political views (because of the additional security-related scrutiny they were under) was noted by a number of activists in the SC case and lies behind Samira’s passionate call for the right to reclaim a ‘radical’ politics:

Radical for me is good. I want to reclaim the word radical because radical is like Emmeline Pankhurst⁷. Radical is the movement to end apartheid; that’s radical. [...] Radical is crashing the housing market. Radical is abolishing tuition fees, that’s radical. Radical is not blowing people up. That’s, that is radical, but that’s not all radical is or can be. Radical can be a very good thing. So like when I say that I am radical, it’s not because I want to... I don’t know, like, it’s not because I want to convert every single human on this earth, it’s because I feel like we should get a universal welfare fund that means that everyone can afford to live and feed themselves. That’s radical to me, right. (Samira, SC, GB)

⁵ Leelo is a traditional polyphonic, usually communal, singing practice specific to the Seto region. See: <https://sacredindigenous.wordpress.com/2012/12/09/seto-leelo-an-ancient-polyphonic-singing-tradition/>

⁶ Misrecognition is understood variously as the withholding of recognition (McBride, 2013: 104), the imposition of depreciating self-images of the colonised by the colonisers (Fanon cited in Taylor, 1994: 65) or as a form of social subordination resulting from institutionalised patterns of cultural value (Fraser, 2008: 84).

⁷ Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) was a British political activist and co-founder of the militant Women’s Social and Political Union (aka the ‘suffragette’ movement) which campaigned for women’s right to vote.

Other refutational positions, in contrast, rejected radical positions preferring to find a way to live with or in the system. Ahmed (SC, GB), for example, felt that there was no point trying to find solutions to society's problems – it was better to adapt to them and just 'try to be a good person myself'. This was a position expressed also by Banu (YMW, DE) who argued that sometimes you need to make compromises and adapt to the demands of everyday society by, for example, accepting that 'You can pray, but during the break, and not during class' (Banu, YMW, DE). 'Anti-system' is thus not always understood positively; indeed for some NIOT activists 'anti-system' was associated with populist right wing discourse designed to appeal to young people (L.D., NIOT, SK; M.D., NIOT, SK). The range of different positions within this concept indicate the wide spectrum of social involvement in which young people engage. In some cases our respondents participated in social movements with strong counter-cultural roots and sought to live 'outside' the system they criticised and developed their own infrastructures and resource bases to support that alternative way of life. Others were socially active but engaged rather in a struggle for recognition in part by precisely those institutions that others sought to undermine.

3.1.4 Outcome of responses: Creating community

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, 'doing something' was important to young people in responding to their stigmatisation regardless of the outcome of their actions. However, considering what those outcomes are helps understand 'stigma' not as a series of individualised attributes (Link and Phelan, 2001: 376), which those affected may resist or challenge, but as a set of power relations in which individuals, communities or the state wield social, economic, cultural or political power in a process of labelling (stigmatisation) 'in order to produce and reproduce social inequality' (Tyler and Slater, 2018: 721).

For many young people an important outcome of responding to the conflict/stigmatisation they experienced was the feeling of solidarity and that they were part of a mutually supportive community. This was expressed most strongly in the No-TAV case study where 'sense of community' was mentioned repeatedly by respondents who felt consciously engaged in 'creating this form of community here that goes beyond the usual norms of living' (Pamela, No-TAV, IT). It is significant that Pamela does not only talk about 'belonging' to a community but its creation; young people are not just the younger generation of an existing, strong community but 'very dynamic and very active' agents in a collective process of creation (Roberto, No-TAV, IT). This is expressed also by Clara (No-TAV, IT) as being a feeling that you are 'part of something which is bigger than the total sum of its parts, its people'. The expression of community belonging and creation among No-TAV respondents has two other very clearly articulated elements. The first is that strong communities are diverse communities: 'The No-TAV movement works because it is not homogeneous, in the sense that you will find an old man alongside a baby in a pushchair, an anarchist, a communist and a Catholic from the valley – there is no conflict between them' (Piero, No-TAV, IT). The second is the recognition that intergenerational relations are an integral strength of the movement and that this aspect of No-TAV is unusual and contrary to the trend of growing intergenerational division and conflict in wider society.

I don't know if this comes about because of the movement or because of their awareness, but they have got to know many of the problems we face as young people and thus we feel very supported by this generation here, whereas in

other contexts [...] the opposite can happen, often manifesting in an antagonistic position between younger and older people [...]. We actually feel very cohesive. (Giulio, No-TAV, IT)

The existence of mutually respectful intergenerational relations is important not only for maintaining internal solidarity but in creating an external enemy. Strong intergenerational relations demonstrate that young No-TAV activists do not have a problem with authority in general, just the state institutions which neither listen to nor represent them. This strong sense of community belonging, trust and solidarity is crucial to enabling young people in the movement to share (anti-system) ideas and values and use that as means not only to manage the stigma experienced but turn that stigma into an asset; a resource for social innovation and change.

HIV activists also see community building as a key outcome of their response to the stigmatisation of those living with HIV. This community building takes place at three levels: through targeted recruitment of community representatives to NGO work; through the education and professional development of those recruited; and through the creation of comfortable and safe communication, environment and projects with members of the HIV community. Activists work within the community and for the community to improve the quality of life of HIV-positive people by organising support groups, individual counselling and support, outreach work and providing medicines in emergency situations. Alyona (HIV, RU) describes her work as a peer consultant which involves reaching out to people directly: 'I arrived and someone was crying, so I said, 'Listen, my name is Alyona. I live with HIV. Let's talk. [...]' (Alyona, HIV, RU). Given that the third sector today is subject to many of the rules of market competition, it is important to note that respondents emphasised the mutual support and solidarity within the community. The HIV activist community is described as heterogeneous, reflexive and sensitive and, despite inevitable competition due to funding shortages and state constraints on civil society organisations, as characterised by strong horizontal relations and cooperation.

Among the Autonomists group, the creation of community is articulated primarily through reference to the 'intense kind of solidarity' (Tatjana, AUT, DE) and community belonging, experienced in the group, which is seen as sowing the seeds of an alternative order:

[...] we stand by each other and are there for each other, somehow. And that somehow led to me to say, 'Yeah, with the group we can somehow bring about change in the structure of society. Because somehow they're already living it to an extent.' (Lothar, AUT, DE)

The Autonomists also collaborate across a broader community of left-wing and anti-racist networks and seek to engage with the inhabitants of their immediate neighbourhoods and, like the No-TAV community, believe their community is stronger when it is diverse:

It is cool when the Hip Hop kids drop by and join us, it is becoming diverse, more cross-over-style, and that's good. Not only black clothes but something other than that Black Bloc stereotype. Better to have some colours and Nike Air than some guy dressed in black with a beer bottle and a five metre Mohican. (Rosa, AUT, DE)

However, with whom the groups should collaborate was a subject of constant discussion and disagreement. Indeed this is indicative of the fact that closeness of social relations also brings with it greater risk of internal conflict; when bonds are strong, they are put to greater test and fractures are felt more acutely. Thus incidence of refutational data – lack of solidarity in the form of internal conflict – may be found precisely in those groups where there is also a strong sense of community. While this is not the case for No-TAV (where many people are ‘born into’ the community), it is characteristic of the Autonomists. Among the reasons for internal conflict among the Autonomists the most frequently mentioned related to disagreements and different positionings on a range of feminist and LGBTQ issues. Rosa (AUT, DE) explained that a lot of women were put off by ‘the classic antifa-macho type’ and Benjamin (AUT, DE) recounted the recent dissolution of one antifa group as a result of internal struggles mainly related to ‘dealing with sexism’. Other sources of internal conflict related to differences over whether institutional structures should be used for activism (Rosa, AUT, DE) and how and when it was best to engage others in discussion (Lothar, AUT, DE). Respondents in this case study also noted intergenerational conflict, or rather disputes with parents and grandparents over their activism (Steffi, AUT, DE; Heike, AUT, DE).

Among the other groups in the cluster, there is remarkably little reference to community as an outcome of response to conflict/stigmatisation. This is not to say that these young people do not have a strong sense of community. Among the two case studies of young Muslims, for example, there is extensive reference to ethnic and faith communities. However, community creation or solidarity is not articulated as an outcome of their active response to stigmatisation/misrecognition. Thus expressions of solidarity among respondents in the ‘suspect communities’ case relate primarily to examples of student Islamic societies offering a ‘sense of friendship and brotherhood and sisterhood’ (Shareef, SC, GB) and a shared ‘halal’ environment (Jo, SC, GB) or collaboration with other movements, for example, participating in the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Among the respondents in the YMW case study, there was greater reference to mutual support and in particular the important role of women’s or girls’ groups within the Muslim community where young women experienced a sense of belonging and shared experiences with other young Muslim women in a warm community atmosphere (MYW, Fieldwork diary, 16 March 2018). Ermine describes these groups as a ‘safer space’ because ‘We were all Muslim. All girls. All about the same age. It was a place, where we could exchange’ (Emine, YMW, DE).

In the NIOT case study, there was a conscious attempt to foster a sense of solidarity; the NIOT participation in the 2017 regional election campaign – designed to prevent the election of the extreme right candidate, Marian Kotleba⁸ – for example was run under the slogan ‘Together we are stronger’ (see Plate 3). However, in stark contrast to the No-TAV movement, NIOT experienced internal intergenerational disagreement. A new, younger cohort of activists who joined the movement mainly in 2017 specifically to mobilise against the extreme right regional governor, wanted a more openly political and targeted (anti-Kotleba) campaign than the older generation, who proposed building the campaign on the promotion of positive values (of tolerance and respect) rather than expressly supporting a negative campaign against a particular candidate (C.D. cited in NOT Field diary, 16 October

⁸ Marian Kotleba is leader of the far-right Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia political party who was Governor of Banská Bystrica Region between 2013 and 2017.

2017, SK). In the end, the youth position won out and appeared justified when the incumbent governor was defeated by the candidate supported by NIOT. At a more general level, younger members of NIOT complained that the generation of their parents tended to expect democracy be delivered to them rather than have to go out and create it for themselves: 'there is a strong tendency for not taking responsibility, but they go and vote every time at the elections, because that's what they learnt during communism' (VS, NIOT, SK).



Plate 3: Anti-fascism march, October 2017. The front banner reads *Spolu je nás viac* (Together we are stronger). Photo: Alexandra Bitusikova

A similar pattern is found among NPCA activists where the older generation is criticised for being stuck in its ways (Igor, NPCA, RU) and not prepared to try different methods for fear of 'rocking the boat' (Kirill, NPCA, RU). In addition the NPCA activists suffered from numerous intra-group conflicts and divisions over different visions for the development of the group as well as personal hostilities, jealousies and scandals (Elena, NPCA, RU) and conflicts between closely aligned groups or regional branches of the same movement (Kolya, NPCA, RU). However, the most extreme example of lack of solidarity was found in the Seto youth case study where the group had insufficient features in common to sustain any kind of social mobilisation in response to their cultural stigmatisation as non-Seto in the region.

As widely documented in social movement theory 'reciprocal emotions' - rooted in participants' ongoing feelings toward each other - are central to sustaining social activism (Goodwin *et al*, 2001: 20). Such relations, in a number of the cases included in this cluster, were expressed as a sense of solidarity and community and both arise out of, and enhance,

the pleasures of shared activism. However, these same emotions can work to undermine as well as strengthen groups of activists (Jasper, 1998: 419).

3.1.5 Outcome of responses: De/re-stigmatisation

As demonstrated in Section 3.1.1, challenging negative stereotypes of, and attitudes towards, their group was the most consistent response to stigmatisation or conflict among the young people studied in this cluster. A strongly desired outcome of that response, it follows, is the de-stigmatisation of the group. This desired response was realised only partially, however. Moreover, respondents also described how their very responses – expressed in a range of different actions – might actually lead to the re-embedding of negative attitudes and further, or new, stigmatisation.

The most positive account of progress towards destigmatisation was encountered among HIV activists. While they remained highly cautious, they noted at least some small movement away from the ‘savagery’ of the 1990s and ‘a little bit more loyalty, tolerance’ (Ruslan, HIV, RU). Olecya, herself living with HIV, felt that things were improving year on year:

[...] while activists are alive, something is changing, one way or another, anyway. I think it's getting better with each passing year. I have been living with [HIV positive] status for eleven years. And between when I found out about my status and now, eleven years have passed. And it seems to me that a lot has changed. Attitude, well, not the whole society, but most people have a more rational attitude. People have become more attentive to this. Doctors have become more rational. So discrimination has decreased. (Olecya, HIV, RU)

However, even though activists and community figures had been successful in creating safe environments for different groups of people with HIV it had not led to wider destigmatisation or allowed the community to become open to the outside world. A particular issue was self-stigmatisation among people living with HIV who, appropriating the morality discourse around HIV, felt themselves ‘guilty’ or ‘dirty’. A particularly telling moment from the researcher’s field diary describes how HIV positive children in an orphanage referred to themselves as ‘vichevye’ (literally meaning the ones with HIV or ‘HIV-ies’) thus defining themselves by their HIV status. It was only after an activist delivered training that they began to talk about themselves as ‘living with HIV’ (HIV, Field diary, 10 April 2017, RU). Teenagers living with HIV also reported feeling afraid of even going online for fear that those they communicate with would discover their status: ‘they have such an internal stigma that I’m going to do something wrong and everyone will know about it, and then I can’t even leave the house at all...’ (Rustem, HIV, RU). One respondent described parking some distance away from the AIDS centre when she visited it and checking nervously whether anyone she knew was in the same car park; when she saw a colleague’s car nearby, she hid until her colleague had left (Vera, HIV, RU).

A similarly ambivalent picture of the outcome of challenging attitudes is found among the new pro-citizen activists. Opposition activists reported some more tolerant attitudes being shown towards LGBT people at their actions (Sonya, NPCA, RU) and moral order activists gave examples of some positive cooperation with the police over issues of concern (about illegal sale of alcohol to minors, for example) (Arkadiy, NPCA, RU). However, there were

many reports of continued negativity towards both groups on the part of the public and, especially, the police.

Such stigmatisation and conflict with state authorities, especially the police, is most frequently recounted in the cases of the Autonomists and No-TAV. Participation in No-TAV movement activities resulted directly in clashes with the police and criminalisation leading to the re-embedding of stigmatisation and conflict. Davide (NO-TAV, IT) explains that this conflict is a vicious circle in which memories of past treatment by the police consolidates activists' 'hatred' of them and the likelihood of future clashes. In the case of the Autonomists, some success was reported in changing representations of the movement in the media (Ferdi, AUT, DE) but the dominant feeling is that their actions and beliefs are wilfully misunderstood and misrepresented by the media and public. For example, attending a demonstration as an anti-fascist means that 'you are immediately judged to be part of the left-wing violent mob that's come to trash the place' (Tatjana, AUT, DE). Tatjana goes on to explain how she was arrested at her first demonstration and that this has effectively criminalised her:

We were held in a jail somewhere and because they arrested me for that day I still have a record in my files. It says 'serious breach of the peace' and it will stay in my file for seven years although I was not charged. (Tatjana, AUT, DE)

This re-embeds a sense of discrimination, unfair treatment and stigmatisation; 'the repression of left wingers is totally absurd and totally over the top' (Jonna, AUT, DE).

In the two case studies of young Muslim responses to misrecognition, respondents reported that attempts to dispel stereotypes of Muslims by doing 'good deeds' had resulted in a degree of destigmatisation (Yardan, SC,GB; Khaled, SC, GB). Ruksana (SC, GB) also reported that her interaction with the police when she reported racist abuse that she had experienced had left her feeling that her complaint had been taken seriously and her rights to be treated with respect recognised. Respondents participating in the YMW case reported support from teachers or the head of the school in protecting them against discrimination and providing assistance. Examples were also given of line managers at work who explicitly tolerated headscarves, strongly rejected discrimination and protected the women from the scepticism of customers or other staff.

However respondents also noted a multitude of ways in which their response to misrecognition could backfire and lead to further stigmatisation. This might come about because challenging negative attitudes, especially through the media, can be misunderstood and further fuel Islamophobic attitudes:

[...] I think often as a, as a Muslim or within the Muslim community there are a number of frustrations that if you share publicly, aren't necessarily understood. And so it's about finding a way where you can express that in a constructive manner, without either feeding into the Islamophobes or putting people [...] who are understandably fearful [...] making them feel much more uncomfortable. (Ruksana, SC, GB)

For some respondents, appearing visibly Muslim was part of their response to the stigmatisation of Islam; an embracing of who you are and a standing up for the right to be Muslim. This form of agency involves a moral dimension signalling agency is not merely the

ability to act but (Martin and Dennis, 2010) but a 'conscious capacity, which is important to the individual's self identity' (Lister, 2003: 28). However, responding in this way, respondents think, may also intensify scrutiny and stigmatisation.

I would say the young man who grows a beard, who wears the Islamic clothing, who goes to the mosque and who refrains from drinking alcohol. The man who lowers his gaze. I feel like these individuals are scrutinised more. In addition to that, I feel like the women who wear the burka are scrutinised even so more than the men. (Abdullah, SC, GB)

The experience of this enactment of agency over one's own body leading not to recognition and respect but increased stigmatisation is something that is reported frequently by the headscarf-wearing participants in the YMW case. For most of these young women, the reaction to the headscarf of people in their environment ranged from irritation to rejection. As visible Muslims, headscarf-wearing young women are subject to animosity and abuse as they routinely navigate public space. Eleven of the women interviewed in the YMW case said they had had such experiences, which ranged from hostile looks, insults and verbal abuse to actual physical attacks.

[I was 13 years old] and alone in a train carriage. And there were three drunken people [...] they were right next to me, [...] the man was just drunk, so I don't take it seriously anymore. But it was a really threatening situation, because I was just so young. [...] [The drunken man] said: 'I suppose you think you look prettier like that? I don't think so. I think you're just as ugly in it.' [...] And then the man opened the door with the train still going and threatened to throw me out to see if God would protect me. (Marvie, YMW, DE)

Particularly hurtful, respondents reported, were cases where starting to wear the Muslim headscarf led to negative attitudes among previously positively disposed people; as Banu (YMW, DE) reported, teachers who had previously always smiled at her suddenly ignored her, apparently offended that 'this flagship, integrated student was suddenly wearing a headscarf'. Banu's experience was not unusual; of the eight women (in the YMW case) who had already started to wear a headscarf at school, six described the reactions and behaviour of individual teachers towards them as hurtful, degrading or stigmatising. This withdrawal of recognition is personally undermining for the young women:

[I said to the teacher] can you say that again, because I didn't understand, then she just said, 'well, take the headscarf off, then you can hear better,' for example. That was it then for me, as far as that teacher was concerned [...] (Mara, YMW, DE)

Finally, as with the HIV activists, respondents in these two studies note the danger of self-stigmatisation or self-appropriation of misrecognition. Ahmed often felt self-conscious reading books about Islam in public places because people would think he was an extremist (Ahmed, SC, GB) while witnessing responses to others led some young women to question their own choices about dress or behaviour (Marvie, YMW, DE). Indeed, young women choosing to wear the Muslim headscarf in contemporary western societies are also subject to stereotyping from within Muslim communities as articulated by Madiha:

I also noticed [after starting to wear the headscarf] that with young men from my Arab environment [...] that the men view me differently now. That I'm somehow this woman who doesn't say boo to a goose, the typical Muslim woman – the idea that very many men have – who doesn't have an opinion on life, nods her head and says 'yes'. But I can't be doing with that. That's not what I wanted to achieve. That's just not me. (Madiha, YMW, DE)

Finally, in the case of the culturally marginalised Seto youth, the response of passive rejection of the cultural hegemony in the region of Seto heritage culture is understood and presented by Seto activists as evidence that these young people are, just as they imagined, uncultured and uncaring – in Indrek's words 'plebs' (Indrek, SETO, EE). Their response of non-participation in Seto events is seen as problematic by Seto activists but explained not by the lack of opportunities to get involved for those who are not interested in Seto-centred activities but as confirmation of their passivity, lack of interest and loss of culture. This becomes a vicious circle; as one respondent pointed out, being negatively labelled as passive discourages these young people from engaging: 'Then the social workers do not understand why the young give up and stop collaborating!' (Siiri, SETO, EE). However, their lack of presence makes them less visible and unable to impact on cultural provision and priorities. As in Willis's (1977) classic study of how working class young people's 'resistance' to low educational expectations of them and limited employment prospects works to actually reproduce their social subordination, so too this apparent 'passivity' on the part of young people in the SETO region re-embeds their marginalisation. The outcome is exclusion; the feeling that the region is being created as 'a kind of reserve for all these pure Setos and it would be preferable if the rest just left!' (Anne, SETO, EE).

3.1.6 Outcome of responses: (dis)empowerment

Respondents across all cases except Seto youth and NIOT, reported that one outcome of responding to the stigmatisation or conflict they had faced was a sense of empowerment. This empowerment was both individual – experienced as self-empowerment as a result of standing up to, and challenging, the stigmatisation or conflict they encountered - and collective - experienced through being part of a group or as an outcome of empowering others.

Individual empowerment was gained by respondents from their participation in activities and interactions within their own structures and with people and institutions outside them. Frauke (AUT, DE) described this feeling as a previously unfelt 'form of freedom' while Liza (NPCA) experienced a growth in 'self-confidence' after she became active in the movement. Central to self-empowerment is the feeling that one is learning (Jonna, AUT, DE; Frauke, AUT, DE), growing as a person and learning to understand oneself (Josef, AUT, DE). HIV activism brings skills and professional development and thus allows participants to accumulate a certain kind of social capital and status in the eyes of other activists. Piero (No-TAV, IT) recognised that the experiences he had in the valley were not only political but ones of profound 'personal growth' that had shaped who he is now. Roberto (No-TAV, IT) acknowledged that:

Without the movement I wouldn't have the political awareness that I am slowly acquiring... Which, from a certain point of view, could also be a skill for the future (Roberto, No-TAV, IT)

Activists in NPCA felt their activism developed their skills especially in relation to communication (Sonya, NPCA, RU) and organisation (Arina, NPCA, RU). They also said they had become politically, economically and legally literate as a result of their engagement and some anticipated turning activism into a profession or income-generating activity. Respondents from the 'suspect communities' case study cited feeling empowered by the acquisition of a range of skills through their social involvement including organisational skills (Ameena, SC, GB), team working and people skills (Ashraf, SC, GB; Ahmed, SC, GB) and public speaking skills (Khaled, SC, GB; Jo, SC, GB). Like Platon (NPCA, RU) who notes that he would never have had the opportunity to meet members of the Legislative Assembly in person if he had not been an activist, Dmitri (SC, GB) also values the 'access to politicians' that activism secured for him. Ruksana (SC, GB) too recognises that activism 'really develops your confidence because it provides you opportunities to sit in rooms with people who traditionally hold power and actually recognise the, the power you wield yourself.'

For HIV activists even acknowledging and talking about their HIV status brings a sense of empowerment. As Renata (HIV) put it, after disclosing her status she felt 'as if a stone had fallen from my soul. It became easier to breathe...'. In a very different, and yet remarkably similar way, Meena (SC) also talks about her activism as being a means to feel comfortable being who she is:

But I think joining student politics made me comfortable in being Muslim. Like for the longest time [...] I hid the fact that I was Muslim. [...] 'cause I felt like I always had to defend myself. When people found out I was Muslim, I always had to be like, 'Yeah, but like we're not like this. But...' I had to do all these apologies on behalf of like, you know, a community, on behalf of people. Whereas now, like I feel like I can just say, 'I am Muslim.' And if anyone has an issue with that, they can say whatever they want, but I will challenge them on it. And I'm more comfortable. Comfortable in being Muslim, or being perceived as Muslim. (Meena, SC, GB)

For participants in the YMW case, empowerment is often the outcome of having taken tough decisions that open them up to potential prejudice and conflict.

Yes many people say: why don't you take off your headscarf? Because I am light-skinned. If I took it off I would pass as a Russian or French. So people say, 'it would be much easier for you if you take off the headscarf. Then you won't have all those prejudices. Also it looks better, you can dress more freely' and stuff. It used to influence me a lot. I used to ask myself 'do I want to wear it or take it off?'. At the moment, when I see all this, it encourages me [to keep it on]. I say 'No, I stand behind it, this is my decision, and if I take it off one day I take it off.' But not because other people have prejudices. [...] In this respect, I must say that I have become stronger. (Teslime, YMW, DE)

Many of the young women described how, as a result of wearing a headscarf, they felt 'more confident' and 'stronger' to overcome the challenges of life in other areas. Some said they were 'proud' of themselves for not taking off their headscarf, in spite of the hostilities and difficulties they faced. In this sense, wearing the headscarf allowed the young women to test their own strength – 'to see if I have the courage to follow a path that the others haven't taken' (Madiha, YMW, DE).

Empowerment also comes from solidarity – from being part of a group that ‘stands up for each other’ (Tatjana, AUT, DE) and being part of a collective (Camilla, No-TAV, IT):

when you feel that you are a part of some movement, of some community, you basically feel more confident... I have friends and those who do nothing, well, they just study or work, and they are more prone to all sorts of depression and introspection. (Masha, NPCA, RU)

Similarly Emine (YMW, DE) talks about the empowerment she experienced through participation in a Muslim women’s group where participants could exchange experiences and ‘speak openly about discrimination’.

In the case of the Autonomists, there is even a sense of empowerment from the physical infrastructure they have created and maintained; talking about a particular alternative centre the group had set up, Anton (AUT, DE) notes that ‘After all those years, after the Nazi shootings, all that fire security hassle, after all the gentrification in this city, they are not brave enough to shut this place down.’ Jo (SC, GB) also talks about the importance to her of having a ‘safe place’ on campus for Muslims to gather:

I often just go to the prayer hall to, like, eat my lunch even, just because it's comfortable and... But also, I think it's like a, it's like a safe space, a safe community for Muslims, to be able to sort of just be themselves. (JO, SC, GB)

Empowerment is also related to the empowerment of others. HIV activist Dina proudly recounts how she had distributed female condoms among sex workers who secretly use them when a client asks for sex without a condom. This doubly empowers the girls since ‘they take more money from the client, but at the same time they are safe’ (Dina, HIV, RU). Natasha (NPCA, RU) talks about her intention to empower others through her own actions: ‘I want to show by my own example that to drink on the street, to walk with the punks - this is not the choice that he really needs in this life’ (Natasha, NPCA, RU). Among activists in the ‘suspect communities’ case, the empowerment of others was described as the outcome of advising, mentoring and acting as a role model for young people (Ruksana, SC, GB). Selma (YMW, DE) also talked about how younger girls saw her as an inspiring example of a ‘strong woman’ or ‘self-confident woman’ who ‘looks like my friends’ Mum, but she does not just stay at home’.

The exception to this rule is the case of culturally marginalised young people in Seto region. In their case their response of out migration or passive rejection of the prioritisation of Seto heritage in the cultural provision of the region further stigmatises them as belonging to an uncultured and rootless lower class. Their non-presence in Seto-dominated events and cultural programmes reduces their visibility and decreases their opportunity to challenge their own marginalisation. Thus, far from empowering them, their response to stigmatisation further reinforces their inferior, failing status in the region.

Other experiences of disempowerment as an outcome of active response to stigmatisation were mainly reported as a result of emotional burn out (Liza, NPCA, RU; Ruksana, SC, GB; Tatjana, AUT, DE; Ulrike, AUT, DE). In two cases, respondents understood powerlessness and empowerment as closely intertwined. Frauke (AUT, DE) felt ‘mega restricted and powerless’ in the face of ‘major powers, large entities, which tell you how to live’. Her response was to overcome this through activism: ‘only if we really do something can we lose

this feeling of powerlessness' (Frauke, AUT, DE). Similarly, Rafi (SC, GB) explains how understanding his own powerlessness (against police arrest and subsequent negative media portrayal following his participation in a student demonstration) had allowed him to transform it into agency and action:

I managed to interpret the feelings that I had as powerlessness. And that was kind of a common theme that a lot of people who have police contact have, is that sense of powerlessness. And I was like, 'That's really unfair, you know. We have these rights that are meant to protect us from like police abuse and stuff. But why do people continue to feel powerlessness in the face of the police?' So part of me was thinking about how can we organise round that. And you know, the thing that resulted from that eventually was the [names regional monitoring project]. (Rafi, SC, GB)

Reflecting on the relationship of different responses to stigmatisation or misrecognition and the outcomes of those responses, it seems that 'doing something' (as Frauke puts it) empowers whereas passivity (as in the case of Seto region youth) disempowers. However, behind this lies, of course, what Rafi recognises as, first, the capacity to interpret the feelings he had as powerlessness and, then, the ability to transform this into action. To understand where that capacity comes from in the case of some, but not others, we need to consider the range of structural and individual enablers and barriers to social involvement experienced by the different groups of young people in this study (see section 3.1.2).

3.1.7 Social change

All of the groups of young people included in this study were selected because they were in some way stigmatised or in conflict with institutions or norms of their society. Existing literature suggests that structural inequalities both stem from and perpetuate social stigma by reinforcing negative connotations of stigmatised groups by limiting their participation in society (Frost, 2011). Our interest in PROMISE was to challenge that assumption and investigate whether such young people might, on the contrary, be motivated to and able to promote and achieve social change notwithstanding (perhaps even motivated by) their own stigmatisation.

The synthesis of findings from cases in this cluster suggests that respondents across our cases sought to achieve social change. They pointed to concrete small changes achieved in their local environments as a result of activism. 'Small steps', even if it changed the lives of just one person, were significant for respondents: 'You shouldn't think that to do good you have to reach thousands. No, it's enough when you can help one person.' (Alina, YMW, DE). The new pro-citizen activists in Russia judged change by the positive reaction of people to their fliers and information and saw this as evidence that the healthy lifestyle message they promoted 'is contagious and slowly, slowly, it all grows' (Alex, NPCA, RU). Among the Autonomists group, respondents were proud of providing a counter narrative to the 'those voices, comments and opinions of those right populists' and having physically disrupted or prevented altogether 'Nazi-marches' (Bernd, AUT, DE).

We have succeeded in making the Nazis lack confidence to walk through our neighbourhood. That means they are no longer attacking anybody. They have to hide, and now live in fear.. We have also been successful in stopping their

propaganda. Now left-wing stuff dominates over right-wing things, which also means that people feel freer and less restricted. (Bernd, AUT, DE)

The NIOT movement – and, as noted above, directly as a result of young people's intervention over the strategy adopted – took credit for making a significant contribution to ensuring the defeat of the extreme right political candidate for regional governor (Marian Kotleba) in the 2017 elections (Z.G., NIOT, SK). As with the Autonomists, NIOT also considers it has contributed to changing the discursive environment: 'I view it as a positive thing, that it has started to be discussed. The fact that people are talking about it is a change for the better.' (Mateo, NIOT, SK). Respondents in the 'suspect communities' case study also felt that 'slowly but surely' efforts to create 'a more equal society' were bearing fruit (Zuhair, SC, GB). Even the Seto region youth, who expressed their frustration with their cultural marginalisation with little hope of anything ever changing, noted the small success over the construction of a skate park (see above). This focus on small acts embedded in 'everyday' social change-making, we suggest, confirms Wood's (2014: 214) conclusion that young people are (re)defining citizenship through re-imagining social action as something that 'doesn't have to be anything big'.

Groups are proud also of building formal and informal coalitions with other groups: in the case of the autonomists this is with other anti-fascist groups to tackle right wing extremism (Benjamin, AUT, DE); for the No-TAV group this involved building strong mutually respectful intergenerational relations within the community but activists pride themselves also on having created in the valley 'a social fabric' that had disappeared from the rest of Italy (Davide, No-TAV, IT).

The young people interviewed were also positive about the potential for the small steps they had taken to lay the ground work for social change in the future. Setting up a new group and attracting new people to it is seen as evidence of future potential (Josef, AUT, DE) and, as Steffi puts it, to be on the right side of history:

I think it is important that you think about the future. I am absolutely sure. Topics like climate change, climate protection. [It is] possible that people stop eating meat in 200 years. And shake their heads asking why did you keep on with the mass production of meat? I think we are standing on the good side of history, but we might not see the change in our life time (Steffi, AUT, DE)

No-TAV activists also recognised that change was not necessarily immanent and activists needed to think about their historical position:

I think that our generation has grown up in a pretty unlucky time. It's up to us to roll up our sleeves and try to change things. And I believe this is gonna happen... not soon maybe, but still... (Paolo, No-TAV, IT)

In the case of the Autonomists, the ground had been laid for future change not least through the infrastructure they had created. Today tourist guides, Anton (AUT, DE) laughs, list the 'nice squatted house, with an alternative pub, a huge garden and bicycle self-repair-garage' that came out of the group's huge arguments with the city administration as one of the city's attractions.

In some cases, activists recognise the potential of their experience to be extended to other sectors or areas of work. Thus Alexander (HIV, RU) notes that working with HIV positive

people allows insights that can facilitate the development of innovative mechanisms to improve the working of the public healthcare system as a whole. One example is the roll-out of their 'peer-consultants' practice to working with young people with diabetes and cancer. No-TAV activists also believed that their protests against the high-speed rail line had developed a 'cross-cutting idea of change' that went far beyond that single issue and included 'the idea of a better society [...] an employment development model, business, environment, social connections' (Alice, No-TAV, IT). One activist from NIOT also felt that the subsequent national, large-scale anti-corruption demonstrations in Slovakia had drawn on the regional NIOT actions (Ondrejov, NIOT, SK).

Respondents recognise that bringing about such change is not easy; despite the progress made in attitudes towards people living with HIV (Olesya, HIV, RU), HIV activists are well aware that the work they do remains only a drop in the ocean in the context of the scale of the problem with HIV infection and continued stigmatisation and thus a lot more needs to be done. However, theories of positive marginality suggest that, by reclaiming one's position as marginal as an advantage instead of a disadvantage, marginalized groups and individuals are able to reframe experiences of stigmatisation as opportunities for activism and social change and that this kind of social creativity can lead to policy reform efforts, which, if successful, can potentially alter discriminatory social structures and diminish the underlying negative meanings of social stigma (Frost, 2011).

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

The concepts below describe factors which either enable or inhibit the social involvement of young people in this cluster. In the cases discussed, social involvement emerged as a result of a combination of several enabling factors. However, the inhibitors, in some cases, were powerful enough on their own to prevent or end social involvement. A distinguishing element of the different concepts which enable or inhibit involvement is also the point at which they affect the young person's engagement; some factors facilitate or prevent engagement before it occurs, while other factors more strongly affect the young person's inclination to continue – or drop out of – engagement. The factors below arose out of the analysis of how young people spoke about their involvement: the central triggers and motivators they recalled for their involvement (getting involved); the satisfaction and well-being it generated (staying involved); the frustration and obstacles they described; and the reasons they believed others do not get involved.

3.2.1 Enabler: Concerns about social problems and injustice

In all cases in this cluster the young people experienced a discrepancy between what they considered just, desirable and appropriate in society and how they experienced that society. The feeling that 'something's not right' – that the given social structures did not provide adequately for the well-being of all – lay at the root of the desire to take action. Events or experiences that affected the respondents emotionally - where injustice occurred either to themselves or to others and/or where they perceived people's welfare being neglected - were strong motivators for taking action. In the case studies in this cluster, the societal developments that the young people sought to take action against are: discrimination and/or exclusion of minority groups (SETO, SC, YMW, HIV); rise of right-wing activism (AUT,

NIOT); decay of traditional values (NPCA); governmental decisions and practices (AUT, NPCA, NIOT, SC, HIV); and the lack of (service) provision for minority groups (HIV, AUT, SETO, YMW). In several cases in this study, political and societal developments on the macro-level provided the backdrop for social engagement including the 2015 influx of refugees and the ensuing collapse of service provisions in Germany (AUT), the election of a right-wing politician in Slovakia (NIOT) and the planning of a high-speed railway in Italy (No-TAV).

The macro-level intersects with the micro-level of individual experience to form a basis for social engagement. In the cases in this cluster the desire to take action against injustice, discrimination and stigmatisation arose both out of first-hand experience and out of other people's experience of unfair treatment. The experience of others included being witness to a situation and hearing or reading about events. The respondents reported incidents they had observed or heard about or refer to people they know, where injustice occurred or where people are not adequately provided for and in need of assistance (NIOT, AUT, No-TAV, NPCA, SC, YMW, HIV). The wish to take action arises out of the emotional concern, e.g. anger or fear, about a situation which was classified as 'not right'. Thus, it involved a cognitive judgement of the situation.

Since childhood, I have always been upset by injustice and the like and I always experienced it almost personally [...] I studied law, I studied, and seeing the discrepancy between what you study and what actually happens... It really made me question myself, wondering 'shouldn't they [the police] protect the citizens, make sure rights are implemented and respected?' (Francesca, No-TAV, IT)

[...] [a]fter 7/7 [date of terrorist bomb attack in London, 2005] ... I was both really upset, but also slightly angry - angry at people who decided to use what I think is a perfect religion and pervert it and use it for their own means, angry at people who started to, kind of, label all Muslims as extremists or terrorists. [...] I felt really angry but in a controlled way and realising I wanted to affect change at a broader level, but not necessarily knowing quite how to do it and I became much more politicised. (Ruksana, SC, GB)

In particular, the cases of the Autonomists and the No-TAV movement provide examples of how the attempts to forcefully prevent activism can be an enabler of this activism, because it increases the activists' justification of their protest⁹. Some of the Autonomist and No-TAV respondents embraced protest even more strongly after being confronted with injustice in the course of social involvement e.g. after experiencing police brutality during protests, stigmatising media portrayal of activists or heightened security regulations at their events.

Seeing how people got beaten up, I couldn't understand how they [the police] could possibly be right. I mean, if someone is right there's no need to show it like that [...] And, when you consider that my mum too was beaten up then... the 'well, maybe they are right' line is a non-starter. (Piero, No-TAV, IT)

⁹ It also works as inhibiting, where the personal risk for the young person becomes too great and they feel silenced, criminalised or their personal safety is endangered (see Section 3.2.9).

The moral order activists of NPCA also narrated their activism as motivated by a concern about social issues, especially what they perceived as the disintegration of essential moral values. Respondents viewed alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and prostitution as undermining their ideal of a healthy society and felt the need to take action against those who engaged in these practices. Such immorality, they believed, lay behind the ‘very high level of HIV’ in Russia, which placed the country ‘at the level of Africa, probably’ (Egor, NPCA, RU). Like in other groups in the cluster, the moral order activists felt even more justified in their social interventions when those who should act failed to do so. For example, Sergey (NPCA, RU) complains that the police do not help the group when they try to uphold the law by preventing people from drinking in public while Elena (NPCA, RU) claims that the police themselves ‘control about 70 per cent of brothels’.

The interpretation of an injustice or a problem as systemic – based on institutional decisions, social discourses or developments on the macro-level – is a prerequisite for respondents to respond through social involvement. However, the recognition of such systemic injustice is not sufficient on its own to support and enable social engagement. This is evident from the SETO case, where young people who regularly experience exclusion, rarely respond to it through action (one exception to the rule is described in Section 3.1.3.). Thus, while on the one hand, protest may indeed start not with a political programme or strategy but with ‘the transformation of emotion into action’ (Castells, 2012: 13; Pilkington and Pollock, 2015: 10), sustained social engagement and action requires more than this. This transnational study suggests other necessary components include: support for and opportunities to take action; experience of self-efficacy; having a ‘plan’ or an alternative narrative of ‘doing the right thing’; and experiencing an increase in well-being by taking action. These factors are explored in more detail below.

3.2.2 Enabler of involvement: Doing ‘the right thing’

As described in section, 3.1.2., a sense of doing ‘the right thing’ is articulated in almost all cases in this cross-national synthesis. In the groups with strong ideological missions (AUT, No-TAV, NIOT, NPCA), but also in cases of young Muslims (YMW, SC), respondents referred to alternative value and belief systems of a political or religious nature, which included alternative constructs of social organisation. These might be categorised as:

- Anti-capitalist/feminist/anti-racist theories and alternative community organisation (AUT, No-TAV, NIOT)
- Democratic organisation of society and the principle of subsidiarity (No-TAV, NIOT, opposition activists of NPCA)
- Spiritual values and being charitable as the enactment of God’s will (SC, YMW)
- Traditional family values and healthy lifestyles (moral order activists of NPCA)

These alternative visions of society offered the young people concrete value systems and goals to pursue in the course of their engagement, that is, they provided ‘alternative narratives’ to channel the discontent the young people experienced in their life-worlds and translate it into purposeful actions.

Believing in doing ‘the right thing’ and taking action to implement a certain way of living together provided satisfaction and an increase in well-being.

Then I was there [at the squatted house/factory area] and life was really nice and made sense. Even when you were stressed, when things became tiring, you had a form of freedom, that I had never felt [before] (Frauke, AUT, DE)

A body of theory, as well as youth cultural practices such as punk, underpinned the Autonomists' visions of alternative ways of living, which they practised in alternative living and working spaces. No-TAV respondents shared a vision of a "fairer world", where sustainable development is the core' (Mefalopulos, 2018: 232). At the core of their movement was a demand for the return of the power of decision-making to the local people in the valley. Similarly, respondents in NIOT were convinced that it was vital to engage people in democratic processes:

Because the state, which we are, in fact, creating and because we live in democracy we should be the ones deciding about our destiny and somebody has to do it, so I am trying to contribute to it. (Ondrejov, NIOT, SK)

The NPCA in Russia also had a clearly defined aim – 'an aspiration to moral ideals' (Egor, NPCA, RU) - which was pursued by activists who 'see themselves as "revolutionaries" and have a clear idea of how to change the life of their society' (Kravtsova and Krupets, 2018: 334). Although there was no unity among the Autonomists about which 'ultimate' model of society was to be pursued, they were united in their rejection of capitalism and their belief in solidarity and derived satisfaction from doing 'the right thing':

What really gives me complete satisfaction is the fact that I know that, in 200 years, when someone takes a retrospective look at our era, we'll be the ones being talked about. (Ulrike, AUT, DE)

For young people of Muslim faith, a similar motivation for social engagement was drawn from their religion. In the case studies of the 'young Muslim women' in Germany and the 'suspect communities' in the UK, many respondents performed acts of charity and participated in social activities as both a way of challenging attitudes to Muslims (see Section 3.1.1) but also as a way of enacting 'God's will' (see Section 3.1.2).

For a Muslim, I, you know, we believe that every ... good thing will be counted, even the intention. So I just like want to get more reward from God, that's it. So that's what encourages me to do more. (Putra, SC, GB)

The HIV activists pursue a more pragmatic version of doing 'the right thing'; seeking to ensure access to essential medication and tackle misconceptions about HIV transmission. Among young people in the Seto region, however, there is no shared narrative of doing 'the right thing'. This may be one reason for their inability to reclaim agency and pursue engagement to counter their exclusion. The only alternatives for action they share and invest hopes in are emigration and leaving the region.

3.2.3 Enabler of involvement: Ability to experience and construct self-efficacy

The concept of political efficacy plays an important role in studies of political behavior, describing the feeling of whether or not individual (political) action can have an effect on the political process (see e.g. Almond and Verba, 1963). In studies of political participation, efficacy is usually measured as either 'internal' (or 'personal') efficacy or 'external' efficacy where 'internal/personal efficacy' is understood as confidence in one's sufficient knowledge

of politics to enable participation and ‘external efficacy’ is the confidence that one’s political participation will have an effect. However, political efficacy might be understood as one aspect of ‘self-efficacy’ as a psychological quality. As Bandura, (1982: 122) explains: ‘Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations’. Consequently, ‘judgments of self-efficacy also determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences’ (*ibid.*: 123). In a cycle of self-efficacy, achievement of goals will increase a person’s self-efficacy and thus their perseverance in overcoming obstacles (*ibid.*). In the development of personal efficacy (early) learning experiences and socialisation in the family environment¹⁰ play an important role, since the most powerful source of self-efficacy is one’s own direct experience of achieving. Studies on young people’s participation show that youth with low levels of self-efficacy are less likely to engage in civic participation (Mason *et al.*, 2011). Self-efficacy -the belief that one’s participation will be successful and the belief that one’s actions can have an effect - are a crucial prerequisite for engagement; persistent lack of self-efficacy will demotivate a person from that action.

However the young respondents in this cluster who acted out of the wish to effect social change often anticipated achieving the desired social change only in the long term. Thus they employed a range of strategies – narratives of successful actions, adapting their goals to what is achievable – in order to construct, retain and increase self-efficacy and avoid frustration. A common strategy was to focus on small-scale achievements and successful ‘small deeds’ (AUT, YMW, SC, HIV, NPCA). Success might thus be no more than the satisfaction of having obstructed the demonstration route of right-wing ‘Nazis’ (AUT) or helping change the mind of just one person (SC, HIV, YMW):

The feeling that, even if it is just one person, if only one person can understand me a little bit better and say ‘ok, I had the wrong picture. She is just like me.’
(Melek, YMW, DE)

For me personally it’s more like that emotion that I feel when I see, like people happy. Like it makes me so ecstatic to know that I’ve put a smile on someone’s face or like changed someone’s opinion on something or, like given someone a break, even for a moment. (Samira, SC, GB)

Thus engaging in ‘small deeds’ can be understood not only as a response to stigmatization - ‘doing something’ (see Section 3.1.5) – but also as a mechanism to sustain activism.

For some activists – those involved in new pro-citizen activism and in the Autonomist movement - actions were experienced as meaningful in themselves. Even if their effect could not immediately be measured, it was important, anyway to take action against what was perceived as ‘wrong’. Among Autonomists, who drew politically on the notion - originating in the women’s movement of the 1970s - that the ‘personal is political’, impact could be achieved in one’s immediate, personal environment (Haunss, 2013) and by starting with oneself:

¹⁰ Family support also has a role in developing resilience and other factors positively affecting social engagement, as discussed in 3.2.5.

For me, it's also politics to say, I'll take a look at myself – myself, not just them over there, or them out there. But to look at what's happening with me. Because the private is political. (Bernd, AUT, DE).

Success might also be measured through the acquisition of skills, building of confidence and development of abilities through activism which affected individuals' lives positively. Organisational, communication and team-working skills, networks and social capital were important benefits for many respondents (SC, NPCA, HIV). All interviewees in the Autonomist case implicitly or explicitly referred to their personal learning process in the scene and how their experiences empowered them as individuals. Their motivation to be, and stay, active in the scene was strongly linked to their personal learning. In particular when the achievement of goals on the macro-social level cannot be achieved, the ability to focus on small deeds, skill acquisition, personal growth and alternative narratives of political impact are motivators for continuing social involvement activities or activism.

I believe that I've learned more in the left-wing than I did in two periods of study, stays abroad and everything put together, so I believe that what I can do today, at work and the kind of person I am now to my friends, I learned it all in the left. (Jonna, AUT, DE)

3.2.4 Enabler of involvement: Personal contact

Outreach work to spread information about activities and recruit new people was an important articulation of agency in particular in the politically-oriented scenes of the Autonomists, the No-TAV movement, the Not in Our Town movement and the New Pro-Citizen Activists in Russia (see section 3.3.2). This recognised that 'lack of information' about opportunities for social engagement was a common inhibitor (mentioned in our study by respondents in Germany and the UK). The internet as a source of information dissemination was mentioned in several cases; for Russian pro-citizen activists, indeed, it was a central source of information for young people who wished to get involved.

However, it was real life contacts (in addition to personal motivation) that were cited in all cases as the main enabler of their own actual involvement. Personal contacts referred on the one hand to people – often friends or fellow students - who actively invited the respondent to join or accompany them to an activity, a group meeting or event (AUT, SC, HIV). The respondents named, in particular, friends, family members and teachers. The latter acted as facilitators by fostering critical thinking and/or functioning as facilitators of involvement in projects.

If I have to identify the key influence on me, it was definitely my history teacher. Then my grandmother, grandfather, then during my first activities a lot of other people, for example a doctor from Bangladesh who has been living in Slovakia. (R.S., NIOT, SK)

Respondents also spoke about how they, in turn, had acted as role models and inspired or motivated others to pursue social involvement.

Perhaps the importance of access, opportunity and personal contact for social engagement can also explain the proliferation of social engagement activities among those already involved. The observation 'one activism leads to another' was mentioned in the British (SC),

German (YMW) and Russian (NPCA) cases. The importance of personal contacts also underlines the relevance of emotional well-being; being acquainted with people involved might lower the threshold of interaction in the new environment, might help those who describe themselves as shy – a commonly named inhibitor to involvement – and could make the young person feel more ‘at home’ at an event, in a group or in a communal activity. This confirms the importance of creating a welcoming environment in groups. Not knowing people presents an obstacle to overcome for the young person, which could end their engagement at an early stage:

I would say there are many projects you just don’t know about. But when you get informed, you find out that there is a lot and you just have to have the courage to try something new. For example, with [young Islam conference] I thought, ‘oh no, I don’t know anyone. What will it be like?’ But you meet so many new people. And because they are people with the same interests as you, who also want to get involved, you often make new friends. (Reyhan, YMW, DE)

3.2.5 Enabler and inhibitor of involvement: Family

In the cases discussed the family was frequently cited as a source of support of young people’s engagement. ‘Family’ refers first and foremost to family of origin as only a small percentage of respondents had children of their own at the time of interview. The importance of parents or grandparents as agents of support for the young people’s social engagement was identified in most cases, but most clearly in the cases of the Autonomists, Not in Our Town, No-TAV, Suspect Communities and Young Muslim Women.

The family was cited as an early form of socialisation into engagement (AUT, No-TAV, NIOT, NPCA). Respondents in the No-TAV movement were most directly influenced by their family background to take up activism. Many had grown up in the valley, came into contact with the movement via their parents and reported positive memories of joint activities such as demonstrations, which felt like ‘family’ events. Going to protests and getting involved was natural to them, since they had already done so as children with their parents.

I was already in it as a child and I had to experience it as something positive, because when you are a child you take part anyway, it was a serene environment, and the demonstration and the whole context felt very homely. (Piero, No-TAV, IT).

Politically engaged respondents of the Autonomists and NIOT spoke about the influence of their parents’ political attitudes on their own. Perhaps surprisingly many of those respondents of the Autonomist scene, whose activities are widely stigmatised and criminalised in Germany, reported little antagonism between their own pursuit of social change and their parents’ views. The political socialisation of the respondents was frequently influenced by their parents.

My mother was raised by racist parents. She left this ideology behind when she grew up, I wouldn’t say that she is actively engaging herself now, but what my parents taught me is that it is important that *all people* are doing fine, not just you [...] (Tatjana, AUT, DE)

My mother is a hardcore feminist and my father a hardcore ecologist and accordingly I was ... I remember for instance the Iraq war, we had a huge peace

flag waving from our balcony. [...] I think my consciousness developed rather early. (Ulrike, AUT, DE)

I come from a family where the two basic values, from the very beginning, have been tolerance and respect. Whatever injustice was happening in society, it was openly discussed [...] and in 1989 my father was one of the main proponents of the November 1989 demonstrations in [town in Central Slovakia], and I most probably inherited this naturally, the belief that simply the injustice towards people and the system which is causing this injustice is something which is unacceptable for us. (M.Z., NIOT, SK)

The influence of the family, in particular parents, but also grandparents and siblings, on their attitudes and motivation to become socially active was also reported by respondents of the YMW, SC and NPCA. Respondents of the YMW referred to their parents as role models, of whom some were actively engaged in the religious community. The NPCA is a mixed case in this line of argument. While some respondents reported their parents as supporting or being 'proud' (Elena, NPCA, RU) of their engagement, several respondents were in opposition to their parents' political attitudes. Some moral order activists reported alcohol abuse and disruptive family environments when growing up, while others proudly talked about their parents' rejection of alcohol and ability to overcome hardships. HIV activists are a partially refutational case; while some experienced activists reported their parents' support for their activities, more recently engaged young people hid their activism and/or lacked parental support. In this case estrangement from the family was most prominent, relating to the family rejecting the respondent due to the stigma attached to HIV infection.

Summing up, the majority of those respondents who spoke about their family referred to their parents as a source of support for their social engagement. Parents and grandparents were defining agents of the respondents' political and moral socialisation. Many were 'proud' of their children's engagement. Beyond this, family support was important as an emotional stabiliser, ensuring the respondents' general support for what they did and who they were: 'My parents have always been there for us [...] even when like, I wasn't appreciative of my parents, they were there to help' (Khaled, SC, GB). The family environment is the first setting where self-efficacy is, or is not, acquired, making the individual more or less prepared to address future challenges. Furthermore, family support increases a person's emotional resilience, making them more able to endure obstacles and potential hardships which accompany activism. As Ruskana of the Suspect Communities case said, 'when you raise your head above the parapet, you are putting yourself out there to be attacked' (Ruskana, SC, GB). The findings also point to the importance of the emotional dimension of the family rather than its socio-economic status. Stable family relations and support of the young person appear as enablers of social engagement. As one NIOT activist notes:

Secondly it is the psychological environment and that is maybe even more important, because if somebody comes from a broken family, I don't mean just divorce, but a family where relationships are not good, so definitely this is a constant source of negative thinking, low self-esteem and a sort of apathy, or this person can't believe that things can be changed. I am getting to know more and more people like this and this is, my opinion is...that everybody gets a

tremendous amount from their family in terms of what we can or cannot achieve. (OD, male, NIOT, SK)

Family appeared as an inhibitor to social involvement in several cases, although only for a minority of respondents (SC, YMW, NIOT and HIV). Several respondents in SC and one respondent in YMW were constrained by their parents' concern about their activities and their fear that the respondents had become 'too religious'. Another very common parental concern was that their children's engagement would interfere with their educational commitments (SC, YMW). In addition, some respondents experienced constraints imposed by their parents on extracurricular activities, in mixed environments or after dark (SC). Although some respondents voiced their parents' fear concerning 'dangerous' activities, interestingly this did not feature in the cases of the Autonomists and No-TAV where physical danger was encountered. On a more general level, NIOT respondents felt that their parents' generation's political apathy could be an inhibitor to the children's social engagement.

3.2.6 Enabler of involvement: Feelings of community and belonging

The creation of, and participation in, a community was a central feature of the young people's activity in several cases, as discussed in section 3.1.4. The feelings of community and belonging generated in the activities constituted strong emotional pull-factors to continue involvement. They were linked to many positive emotional states, which the respondents experienced in engaging in their activities with others, such as trust, mutual support, solidarity, protection and belonging. All cases except the Seto youth demonstrated some evidence of feelings of community.

Mutual trust, support and the collective experience of being 'like a family' were described by respondents of the Autonomists, the HIV Activists, No-TAV and NPCA. The feelings generated in this process increased respondents' well-being and their intrinsic motivation to continue their involvement:

And the main thing was that I was really drawn [to the movement] ... by its spirit, which gave the sense of being part of some pirate brotherhood. It was clear that it was also benefiting people and for me that is a key motivating factor [...] (Vera, HIV, RU)

I like to be with my comrades, with people from the movement, because I really feel part of a community, a family, I feel good as well. (Alice, No-TAV, IT)

As discussed in section 3.1.4., the Muslim youth in the UK and German cases experienced community particularly in relation to their faith and ethnic communities. They were engaging in communities where their religion was not a source of stigma and they organised around this aspect of their identities. Gatherings in the environment of student Islamic societies or prayer halls felt 'like a safe space, a safe community for Muslims, to be able to sort of just be themselves' (Jo, SC, GB).

While affective factors and aspects of well-being were recurrent in all of the above concepts which enabled young people's participation, this dimension gains even more relevance here. The collective experience augments eudemonic aspects of well-being. This became particularly apparent in politically-oriented cases. Aspects of well-being such as 'positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth' (Ryff, 1989: 1069) are generated in the creation of communities and collective action. Respondents experienced

the collective production of ‘meaning’, practising alternative ways of living based on shared values and ‘being part of something bigger’ as facilitators of their individual satisfaction and well-being. The prominence of the well-being benefits of the community experience was most striking in the accounts of No-TAV and the Autonomists.

And [I experienced] community and emotional security, that I had never known. It was like therapy, doing something I love and sharing it with others [...] I still feel it in my heart and I want to experience it again. (Frauke, AUT, DE)

The community gives me [...] a good level of serenity which makes me feel protected, so that I know that if something happens to me, the community is with me. (Roberto, No-TAV, IT)

Many of the aforementioned aspects that facilitated respondents’ social engagement are amplified in the experience of community. The conviction of doing ‘the right thing’ is consolidated by the mutual reinforcement of the group and self-efficacy can be increased by collective action: ‘together you can get results’ (Roberto, No-TAV, DE).

I welcome you as a No-TAV, because you are in the right. Because the No-TAV movement is not only a protest against a train, it is the sharing of a set of values which makes you one of us. (Isabella, No-TAV, IT)

That really impressed me and I said: ‘Okay, they [the Autonomist group] represent, they practice what I envision, being there for one another.’ And that led me to say, ‘Yeah, with this group I can do something to change the structure of society. Because they are already living it, to an extent. Just putting it into practice, as much as possible.’ And that led me to stay with the group. (Lothar, AUT, DE)

3.2.7 Inhibitor of involvement: Scene exclusivity and internal dispute

Although the experience of community, for many respondents, facilitated a strong motivation to continue involvement, in some cases, a specific scene community could act as an inhibitor to social engagement. While this arose only in a minority of cases (AUT, YMW), it is important to recognise its role in inhibiting social engagement and suggests that mechanisms of exclusion may be present, although not visible, in other communities also.

The exclusion of certain groups of people and lifestyles from the scene was articulated most clearly in the case of the Autonomists. From this group, people with children were excluded as well as, on a more implicit level, people who lacked the cultural capital and/or educational background to understand and follow the codes of the scene. The exclusion of parents and their children was both implicit and explicit. Implicit exclusion concerned ignorance towards the needs and real-life situations of parents. Explicit exclusion concerned doubting the appropriateness of having children: ‘Are people in the scene supposed to have children? Is it ok to bring children into a world like this where everything is collapsing?’ (Heike, AUT, DE). Banning children from house projects or unwillingness to create child-friendly spaces was also encountered:

For instance we started a baby group in one house project [...] and there was the communal cooking and eating project. That project was very well known for its extensive smoking. And we asked them to refrain from smoking at least for half

an hour during the communal eating, when we were joined by the kids – but they were not having it. No chance. Like they said: ‘We always used to smoke when our kids were there and it didn’t do them any harm’, and ‘don’t make such a fuss’, and ‘you bloody eco-mums.’ And stuff like that. (Rosa, AUT, DE)

There was an overall awareness of the relative ethnic homogeneity of the Autonomist scene and its lack of attractiveness to ethnic minority youth. Some respondents recognised that cultural codes prevalent on the scene inhibited the participation of people from other social or ethnic strata. An unwillingness of activists to engage people in the scene who would disrupt the established cultural codes – for example through sexist jokes – was mentioned by one respondent. The scene itself was characterised by intense discussion about recurrent issues such as anti-Semitism, feminism, and racism and there was frequent internal discord. Jonna explained that depending on the topic, people holding entirely different views from the dominant scene discourse would inevitably be excluded from the discussion: ‘when we talk critically about other religions, people who are believers are simply excluded’ (Jonna, AUT, DE).

Group homogeneity as an inhibiting factor was also mentioned by individual respondents in the two case studies with young Muslims, albeit to a lesser extent. This referred to language and/or ethnic homogeneity, where respondents felt excluded because everyone spoke in Arabic (SC) or in Turkish (YMW). Moreover, the participation of non-Muslims in group activities was lower than desired, suggesting implicit mechanisms of exclusion at play. A respondent explained how her non-Muslim friends were reluctant to participate in activities by a Muslim girls’ group:

My friends think it is cool what I do. They think it is a pity that they cannot participate, but they think, since they are not Muslims they cannot do anything with us [in the mosque community]. But I tell them: ‘yes, you can come’. And then they feel uncomfortable, because they’re the only ones in the group [who are not Muslims]. Which I can understand. (Marvie, YMW, DE)

In the cases of NPCA, HIV, SETO and NIOT, no evidence was found of the exclusion of certain groups from activities due to their (lack of) cultural capital, socio-economic status, religion or other group belonging; this does not mean such did not exist, however. There is some evidence of such exclusion in the case of the moral order activists of NPCA where the discussion of political topics was largely avoided in order to prevent internal scene disputes. As discussed in Section 3.1.4 and 3.3.4, No-TAV is a refutational case regarding exclusion. Their sense of community is – based on the accounts of activists – inclusive and overcomes boundaries of age, class and political affiliation. Piero considered the group’s diversity to be a central asset and a strong enabler of participation in the movement since everybody contributed something unique and valuable: ‘it has always been said within the movement that each person contributes according to [their] own means, to what they feel like doing, giving whatever they have to give’ (Piero, No-TAV, IT).

3.2.8 Inhibitor of involvement: Institutional and structural barriers

Some respondents, in particular among the young Muslims interviewed in the UK and Germany, had found opportunities for social engagement in institutions. They started their engagement via activities which took place at their schools (e.g. refugee help, social

engagement projects), universities (Islamic student organisations, Student Unions) or mosques (youth groups, charity events). The activities received institutional support: meeting rooms (YMW, SC), providing infrastructure and organisation of classes (YMW), funding (HIV) and training (YMW). While institutional support for activities is a strong enabler, lack of support and institutional barriers are strong inhibitors of involvement. Institutional barriers and bureaucratic hurdles to engagement were reported in over half of the cases (NIOT, AUT, NPCA, HIV, No-TAV). SC and SETO reported a general lack of support for young people's activities and gathering spaces. Institutional and structural barriers included lack of funding for alternative spaces and projects (AUT), as well as bureaucratic obstacles to the organisation of events (NPCA). The NIOT and the HIV activists described restrictions on the work of activists in schools. NIOT activists experienced school regulation restricting NGO access to elementary schools and to those organisations authorised by the county council, which prevented them from offering their tuition on 'information literacy' and 'disinformation' to pupils. In the case of HIV, state legislation banned sex education in secondary schools under the Federal Law on 'protecting children from information that is harmful to their health and development', which meant that the use of condoms could not be discussed in schools. The HIV activists however are a mixed case in this argument because, despite the above legislative restrictions, the activists reported overall support from the state for their activities in the form of funding for their organisations. As one activist put it: 'With the state there, there is no conflict. Otherwise, we would not be sitting in [name of the hospital]' (Alex, HIV, RU).

No-TAV is an interesting case with regard to the role of state structures. Although activists described the state's response to them as ignorant to their demands and strongly opposed to their actions, citing, for example, police violence towards activists at demonstrations, activists did not frame this in the context of institutions inhibiting their actions. Indeed, for several respondents such state responses justified forceful action on the part of No-TAV. In this sense it was even, potentially, an enabler:

As I said before, you reach a point where clashes are the only way you have to be heard. It is a battle of the have-not, between us and the police, while those with real power watch us from above and do nothing but laugh at us. That's what I think. (Martino, No-TAV, IT)

What the 'No-TAV' movement asked for [...] is the real chance to say 'No, we are not doing this major construction anymore.' That's where violent demonstrations, sabotage and black blocks symbolically taking down fences [...] all come from. Yes, I completely agree with things like that, and I think those actions are the result of the total indifference of institutions at the highest level. (Piero, No-TAV, IT)

Several studies have demonstrated that lower income levels and education levels are correlated with lower participation in volunteering, election and other participatory behaviors (Brady *et al.*, 2012). For the respondents in this cluster, however, a disadvantaged economic position does not emerge as a clear-cut inhibitor to involvement. Rather, in the case of the young Muslims in the UK for example, socio-economic disadvantage plays an indirect role in inhibiting participation in that economic pressure meant that the young people had to focus on work or study leading to 'lack of time' being cited as an inhibitor to involvement. Lack of 'critical thinking', which could be associated with education, was,

however, mentioned by respondents in reference to others who were not active. It was thus named as an inhibitor that prevented other young people from becoming engaged (NIOT, YMW, AUT, HIV).

3.2.9 Inhibitor of involvement: Threat to personal safety and/or integrity

Respondents in a few cases in this cluster reported being inhibited in their social involvement because they experienced threats to their personal safety, personal integrity, and/or because they experienced criminalisation, stigmatisation and victimisation in the course of their engagement (AUT, SC). Although this was discussed directly in only a few cases, it is likely that it nevertheless deters young people from engagement in other environments as well.

Being socially involved as a threat to personal safety, integrity and/or career was apparent in the case studies of the Autonomists and the Suspect Communities. Police brutality was a frequent experience at Autonomist demonstrations. Respondents considered this a deliberate strategy to intimidate young people and deter them from protesting. Scene activists also experienced physical attacks and threats from right-wing extremists. The criminalisation of their activities was another worry expressed by respondents on the left-wing scenes in which the Autonomists engaged. They described arrests at demonstrations as frequent and random and leading to criminalisation and consequences for their (professional) life beyond activism even if they were subsequently never charged. Respondents of the Suspect Communities described the fear that in the current climate of securitisation, criticism of that discourse made them subject to public scrutiny. The stigma attached to being Muslim made respondents afraid to voice opinions which were critical of the political mainstream. Some respondents were concerned that any public engagement could, in the long run, backfire; their stigmatised subject position meant that they did not feel in control of how their statements might be interpreted and presented, and how this might impact on their career and compromise their personal integrity. Young Muslims active in university contexts felt that they were being scrutinised in the media as well as by other student bodies for their policies and public statements. This, they felt, intimidated and silenced young Muslim activists.

Like you want to talk about an issue that doesn't really [...] have anything to do with Muslims, [...] Like for example, with the monarchy. [...] But suddenly if you're not a white British, and you say something anti-monarch, about the monarchy [in] a negative way, suddenly you get all these comments about, 'Oh, go back to your own country,' things like that. (Ashraf, SC, GB)

The biggest worry for me going into politics is [...] the public scrutiny. [...] Because I just don't know what people can scrutinise... [...] Anything that I could just say could just easily be taken out of context and just scrutinised. And then it's – are you ready to face that backlash? As I am now – no. I would not be ready as an individual now to face any sort of backlash. I would definitely crumble. (Fiza, SC, GB)

I think the effect it's intended to have is to stop us commenting on anything which happens. It is a silencing mechanism. It's a silencing mechanism of young voices, of Muslim voices, of young POC voices, and to take those out of the [...]

social sphere and the public sphere in that sense. That's definitely what it's meant to do. (Zuhair, SC, GB)

The other cases in this study did not provide evidence on how discourses of threats to public security, public scrutiny and fear for one's own personal safety, career and/or integrity inhibited young people from social involvement. However, we assume that this inhibitor is not limited to the two cases discussed, but also deters people from engagement in other scenes that are criminalised or stigmatised for their engagement or considered a threat to the existing political order and to young people of stigmatised (minority) groups who 'raise (their) heads above the parapet' (Ruskana, SC, GB). This inhibiting factor is in fact amplified by social media and the internet where everyone is open to public scrutiny and there is a lack of control over one's public representation online. Other cross-European studies of young people's participation have found that fear of the consequences of participation – for example if a present or future employer were to search social media or online sources – are a strong inhibitor of participation (Sipos, 2018). Furthermore surveys in various European countries and the US have shown that online abuse and hate speech in social media deter people from voicing their opinion online. While everyone can become a victim of general abuse and hate speech, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experience targeted abuse online. Research indicates that women and immigrants are particularly affected by targeted online abuse on the basis of their gender or ethnicity, effectively scaring them into silence (Fladmoe, 2017; Dhrodia, 2017; Amnesty International, 2017).

3.2.10 Inhibitor of involvement: 'Nothing will change anyway'

In almost all cases in this cluster (except No-TAV) respondents felt that the belief that 'nothing will change anyway' was an inhibitor to social involvement of other, non-engaged young people. NPCA activists reported direct interaction with 'passive' youth who, they said, did not believe their action would have an effect. This indicates a lack of self-efficacy (see Section 3.2.3) and applied both to the lack of belief that they could effect change either in their immediate surroundings – such as getting a lift repaired in a block of flats – and in their own political efficacy, i.e. that they could have a political impact through, for example, voting. Both the Autonomists and NPCA drew a clear line between themselves and 'passive' youth. Lack of trust in state institutions, the media, politics and politicians was named as a facilitator of resignation and passivity in Russia (NPCA), the UK (SC) and Slovakia (NIOT). Corruption was mentioned as an additional problem in Russia and was seen as resulting in lack of trust in institutions. Respondents of the Suspect Communities case spoke about tokenism and the career orientation of politicians, which obstructed authentic representation of young people and their issues and made the respondents feel disillusioned about conventional political participation. Most respondents spoke about what deterred *other* young people from becoming active. The exception was the case of Seto youth, who talked about their own scepticism about efficacy and the possibility of social change:

I cannot be bothered [...] I think for so many [the Seto issue] is already complete bollocks, they know nothing will change ... and I personally think it is getting worse or if it is not getting worse then at least nothing is getting better. (Indrek, SETO, EE)

The very fact that the majority of young people in our cases were socially active despite such scepticism, however, suggests that a lack of trust in institutions does not automatically deter young people from social engagement. This corresponds with other studies on young people's political participation, which suggest that distrust in the existing political institutions, and thus lack of external political efficacy, can in fact be accompanied by high levels of engagement. Personal political competence – in other words, internal political efficacy – is associated both with interest in politics and political participation even in the absence of external political efficacy (i.e. distrust in state institutions and government responsiveness) (Dermody *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, lack of trust in existing institutions can act as a facilitator of involvement in alternative scenes outside of state institutions as illustrated by one Autonomist respondent in this cross-case analysis who described how his engagement in the Autonomist scene had begun after he became disillusioned with engagement in a conventional political party.

I turned my back on the SPD (Social Democrats) when they were debating about refugees. Sigmar Gabriel (former leader of the SPD) was arguing even more conservatively than Angela Merkel. She was saying: 'We can do it', whereas Gabriel was going on about capping the number of refugees. And that's when I started to become an activist on the streets doing politics in a direct way. (Lothar, AUT, DE)

3.3 How are aspirations for (political) participation and (political) agency expressed by conflicted young people?

The final question addressed in this cross-case analysis concerns how young people's participation and agency (or aspiration to it) was expressed by young people. 'Agency' refers here to a person's or group's capacity, or power, to think and act in a way that they choose and in a way that alters their or others' situation(s). As evidence of agency, some respondents referred to the results or effects of their activities including how they impacted on others. The interdependent nature of structure and agency (Giddens 1979: 49-95) means that young people's will to act is deeply entwined with macrosocial, structural, conditions and relates not only to past or present circumstances but imaginations of the future. Agency amongst the young people in this cluster, for example, is directed to the present – in the form of the capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 963) – but also to the future, as young people imagine alternative possibilities. Indeed, future-oriented agency might be seen to counteract developments imagined as problematic for young people's individual or collective future. Respondents in this study, however, are also motivated by what is going on in their immediate, (microsocial) life-worlds especially in terms of local urban planning and provision for leisure and socialising. As Harris and Wyn (2009: 327) note, these local environmental issues play a particularly prominent role in young people's participation and agency because of their particular 'embeddedness in their local worlds', which are central to their self-making and a key site of opportunity for efficacy in everyday life. Agency and the desire to participate socially and politically are also developed through individual learning and self-socialisation processes (Silbereisen *et al.*, 2013).

Aspirations for (political but also social) participation are understood here as a form of agency directed towards tackling issues of public concern through individual or collective action. The aim to change things – be it through small deeds in local settings or challenging ‘the system’ as a whole – is articulated in all cases. Unconventional political participation in order to express one’s own, or the group’s, opinion and to exert influence over political or administrative structures and processes is employed – as another expression of agency - in most groups in this cluster to challenge the political, economic, social and cultural status quo. Participation is often justified on the basis of moral judgments related, mainly, to questions of social justice. For example, many of the respondents in our study expressed this as a feeling that they were duty bound to become politically involved or to speak out against the causes of inequalities: ‘For me, as the great grandson of Nazis, who has had a privileged upbringing here, [I felt a sense of] responsibility to open my mouth’ (Bernd, AUT, DE). This confirms Martin and Dennis’ (2013) finding about the importance of the moral dimension to action. Lister’s (2003: 28) perspective on (moral) agency sees it as a ‘conscious capacity, which is important to the individual’s self-identity’. It is worth noting, in this context, that in articulating their aspiration to participation and agency, respondents in this study always referred to a form of community based on ethnic, religious, local, political, cultural and/or social attributes.

In this final empirical section of the report, therefore, we consider the range of expressions of participation and agency - or ‘doing something’ (see Section 3.1.2) - articulated by young people as a response to the conflict and stigmatisation they experience. These expressions of participation and agency are explored through the following concepts:

- ❖ self-organisation;
- ❖ mobilisation;
- ❖ (alternative forms of) communication and articulation;
- ❖ (alternative) life-styles and (alternative) forms of interaction;
- ❖ activities and festivities, direct and indirect (political) action and activities, including demonstrations and solidarity campaigns;
- ❖ participation as the (in)capacity to act.

These concepts have been derived from the synthesis of data from the cases in this cluster in order to systematise similarities and differences across the individual cases. In reality, and analytically, however, the content and context of concepts overlap.

3.3.1 Getting organised

Creating self-organised communities is central to the young people’s activities (see 3.1.4.). The purpose of such community organisation is to become stronger, self-reliant and not isolated, but also to be heard and to be seen by others. As Bernd (AUT, DE) states, ‘getting organised’ is important ‘because you won’t get anywhere on your own.’ Groups (except for NPCA) adopt alternative and leaderless patterns of group organization in the form of grassroots, basic-democratic organisations but also loose peer-groups. These organisational patterns can be described as easily accessible, non-formalised and (relatively) non-binding.

Young people respond through self-organisation to a range of global developments and crises – such as surges in refugee flows, terrorist attacks, international conflict, major (macro-)social crises including environmental and health issues - but also to domestic

policies and national crises. Getting organised around shared interests was one of the central ways in which respondents across our case studies (with the exception of the Seto youth - see below as well as section 3.1.1. and 3.3.7.) expressed agency. In some cases, getting organised meant establishing relatively formal, organisational bodies such as a youth committee in the No-TAV movement, cooperating with civil society actors in Slovakia (NIOT) or founding an NGO in Russia (HIV). As Giulio (No-TAV, IT) noted, the re-establishment of the 'Youth Committee' of the No-TAV movement, was 'a great step, very satisfying' because it brought together young people engaged in the everyday life of the movement. However, in most cases, young people organised informally – in groups, scenes, formations, committees, networks and projects. Such groups acted and organised more spontaneously or accidentally (AUT, SC) and were informally organised (NPCA) around loose peer-groups (SETO), DIY cultures (AUT, No-TAV), and to a certain extent around youth cultures (AUT) and style preferences (YMW). The latter type of groups and scenes have the lowest thresholds for entry and are least hierarchical. Entry to such groups was easy or 'free' and such groups often emphasised the importance of barrier-free and non-profit-making meeting places for young people in urban spaces. Independently of how politically and socially engaged the groups were, however, all organised events that were mainly or solely for socialising and strengthening in-group bonds. At such events, Francesca (No-TAV, IT) says, 'You meet other young people there and at the same time you learn something new about an issue that maybe you didn't know'.

Social media is a major tool for the organisation and mobilisation of young people's activities (see Section 3.3.3). The activities and strategies for organisation are rich in content and number and centre around group-specific agendas and organisational and administrative issues concerning their own infrastructures. This implies not only dealing with their own logistics and group-specific locations, but also handling practicalities such as the organisation of activities, which, across our cases, include demonstrations (AUT, No-TAV, NIOT) and events (as above and YMW, SC, HIV and NPCA).

3.3.2 Mobilisation and outreach: Increasing numbers

With the exception of young people in the SETO case study, the respondents in our study can be characterised as members of (socially) engaged and (politically) active groups who want to mobilise other (young) people outside of their own groups and civic society more widely. Respondents reach out to others and express ideas, concepts and alternatives in the hope of educating, convincing and recruiting to their cause. This is a core element of all groups' struggle for agency and participation: 'those who at least, generally speaking, are on our side, we have to reach out to them, we have to win them over, enlighten them' (Rosa, AUT, DE). Just how to do this, however, is a contentious issue within groups.

Political agency, social engagement and the aspiration to participate in decisions about civic and societal developments are deeply entwined with social (and other forms) of capital. This is reflected in respondents' understanding of the importance of having supportive parents (see section 3.2.5.) or strong intergenerational relationships within the movement:

[...] if you have people say more experienced than you there is a lot to learn [...]
It's an enormous opportunity, more unique than rare, I am very happy that I was
born here in the Susa Valley [smiling]. (Piero, No-TAV, IT)

The mobilisation and outreach to other (young) people includes attempts to help raise self-confidence and feelings of self-worth, to empower them to think for themselves: '[...] what I do with the girls is be their support [...] Show them: "Hey, here is someone who believes in you. You can do it. You can manage"'. Mostly it is about school. Yeah. That's my main motivation' (Emine, YMW, DE).

A number of concerns in relation to reaching out to others recur across most cases in this cluster. One concerns *how* to design 'public relations', in order, for example, to successfully mobilise others:

The focus of the committee is to raise awareness among young people on the issue of high speed - but also on other [...] current issues. The aim is to involve as many young people as possible in the Valley... (Anna, No-TAV, IT)

This raises questions about the best methods and didactic approaches to use. When deciding on their approach, groups are conscious of their target audience: '[...] we always are conscious of trying to reach Muslims who are not practising. But I don't think that's by preaching. It's more social. Just come and join us; like, let's have some pizza' (Shareef, SC, GB). However, when trying to reach 'non-Muslims', the SC group used a more educative approach such as the 'Discover Islam week'. Reaching this broader audience - how to 'preach to the not converted' – was also discussed in the No-TAV group. In these cases 'if we only speak about TAV (High Speed Railway) it becomes a bit limiting [...] The strength of the movement and the strength perhaps of the Youth Committee is instead to talk about various realities and various situations' (Roberto, No-TAV, IT). Fostering the mobilisation of others (including peers) implies their 'recruitment'. This is done through. For example, discussions and empathic interactions, focusing on solidarity with each other and/or with underprivileged groups (No-TAV, SC, NIOT, YMW, AUT, HIV). In some cases this collaboration extended to cooperation with public authorities (SC, NIOT, NPCA).

The question of representation remains contentious, however. Not all respondents feel represented by those speaking and acting within their groups and some resented 'privileged' young people taking on that role (SC, AUT). Other reasons for not feeling properly represented can be the different (perceived) degree of involvement of members, a different social and/or ethnic background and also the (slightly) different perception of the group's policies. However, some respondents were positive about how representation functioned and mentioned explicitly that their representation and involvement in an organisation had made them feel more confident and that organisational representation allowed them to voice their criticism and to be heard more effectively.

In addition to the thorny issue of who the group actually represents, another concern was how, and to whom, the group reached out externally. Some groups, or some people within groups, were not willing to extend beyond the already converted:

(...) they cut themselves off from those that they are actually trying to convince, and in such an identity-centered way, I mean that also rejects them, because 'they're the bad ones now' or 'they're the ones that haven't checked it out or don't do things right'. (Criz, AUT, DE)

Mechanisms of exclusion are at play here, as described in section 3.2.7. However, as Benjamin notes below, it can be 'really hard work' to reach out to others:

[...] it's really important for us to reach other people and it's really important that we organise other people. But when it comes down, in concrete terms, to which people that could be and what problems they could bring with them, then it's better to say, 'okay, no, it's probably better that we have fewer people, because it could become really hard work'. And it leads to new problems that we couldn't have envisaged before. [...] maybe we need to broaden our horizons a bit so that we can integrate new people. (Benjamin, AUT, DE)

For some groups, cooperating with public institutions (SC, NIOT, NPCA, HIV) and motivating the general public to engage in resisting intolerance and public silence was seen as the most effective way to reach their objectives. Mateo describes why, in the Slovak context, educational institutions were the chosen network partners for their purposes:

[...] not a single school taught me how to think. And as far as I am concerned this is a very serious problem in the current education system in Slovakia, that schools don't teach critical thinking, how to analyse data, how to think about what a person consumes, how to process the data and how to evaluate and verify the truth of the acquired information. Nobody ever taught me this anywhere. (Mateo, NIOT, SK)

Others expressed their (perceived) need to reach out especially to unpolitical youths or those who show little interest in politics in order to infuse them with their own aspirations (NPAC, No-TAV). This dichotomy between interested and engaged youth on the in-group-side and average, not deeply politically involved youth on the out-group-side is an antagonism that was expressed in nearly all cases:

The most relevant difference between a young guy who 'wastes time' in the No TAV Youth Committee or any other political organisation, and another young person, is that the former hopes for a better future and hence mobilises so as to change the future and doesn't just wait for others to do something for you. (Martino, No-TAV, IT)

3.3.3 Spread the word: Social media communication, counter narratives against stigmatisation and symbolic production

Conflicted young people in Cluster 2 use different 'alternative', self-produced forms of articulation and communication to express their aspirations for participation and agency. These include a variety of 'alternative' dialogue and communication activities and social media communication both inside and outside the groups. These forms are accomplished productions of group-relevant signs and symbols. 'Alternative communication' forms include ideas, concepts and projects against different forms of stigmatisation and discrimination. These produce counter narratives to challenge stigmatising and discriminatory images and practices presented in the media and to paint a different picture. One example of how messages are crafted to leave a positive impression of one's own group was encountered in the 'Positive Children' campaign which states 'We are the same as everyone else, we just help our health with pills, but otherwise we are no different from others' (fragment from Positive children, 2018; HIV, RU). Social media is also an important platform for young Muslims (SC, YMW) to become visible and to counter the negative associations with their faith. It provides a medium through which they can challenge Islamophobic and stigmatising

practices. This counter information is mainly amplified and broadcast via social media and other group-related (printed) media.

As described above, the communications and messages are directed to the outer world but also function internally. They are directly or indirectly addressed and symbolically expressed forms of communication and can, for example, include the production and use of signs and symbols in the form of graffiti or banners that convey direct or more symbolic messages. Young people's conflicts with their cultures of origin and the dominant culture can be understood – following a traditional CCCS subcultural theory line – as a struggle through stylistic and semiotic means. Symbols and signs are newly created or decontextualised to embody refusal of, and resistance to, dominant forms of culture (Clarke and Honneth, 1979; Hebdige, 1988). Activities on the street are prominent in our cases and include (over)painting and spraying of graffiti, the production, removal and application of stickers or the production and use of banners during protests and demonstrations.



Plate 4: Banner painting for a local Anti-Nazi demonstration. (Permission to use this photo was granted by the photographer, a member of the activist group)

Agency and aspirations to participate are also expressed by an individual's corporeal messages, including the selection of clothes, symbols with references to youth cultural styles, tattoos, haircuts and also – prominent within two of our case studies – the wearing of the Muslim headscarf. Wearing the headscarf was described as 'an "inner" process [...] which is visible from outside' (Emine, YMW, DE), 'like a tattoo. It's an inner decision. (...) It's also something that stays on your skin all your life that people see' (Banu, YMW, DE). Wearing the headscarf was described as a means to express belonging and integration to

the ethnic community and a symbol of faith and individual spirituality: 'And the reason I decided to wear it [eventually] was that I actually genuinely became closer to my faith.' (Fiza, SC, GB). The combination of a Muslim headscarf and modern stylish clothing can lead to irritation on the part of some native onlookers, however, as well as within the particular ethnic communities. Nevertheless it can be seen as an expression of individual agency and one that must be viewed in the broader political context of Islamophobia, racial hatred and ethnic discrimination which is a daily reality in most European nations.

Artistic group-related performances are another means to communicate the group's wish to be heard and to participate. Such performances include theatre, spoken word poetry events, singing in a choir or playing and performing either in a band or as a hip-hop act. The latter were mentioned not just as sources of influence, part of the individual political socialisation process and important sources and events for expressing individual agency, but also as a means of socialising with peers from other scenes and regions. Such events and performances also allow the group to become known as having the capacity to organise such cultural or scene events in their locality or region. Moreover, alternative meeting venues, such as squat houses and cultural centres for young people, not only maintained the groups' own infrastructure but had become important ways in which they participated in local urban planning and city development policies (AUT, No-TAV):

All these projects that are hip now, and where all the cool young folks go, they originate from left projects, left cultures, like the [alternative community centre] it's a reason to take photos, [it's] mentioned in tourist guides. Nice square yard with plants, a bar, alternative cinema, bicycle repair station and so on. And this is what the mayor is praising, saying, 'hey look here in [name of the city] we have nice corners, the [alternative community centre], the [formerly squatted houses] and so on.' It all originates from that. (Anton, AUT, DE)

As emphasised above, social media is used widely and serves as a central tool to communicate within the groups and to maintain and establish the groups and group-building processes:

The good thing is, you can tell people easily, send flyers with a click, or send emails. It's handy, because you don't need to see people. Or [do] doodle-polls. [...] That's very handy. On Instagram there is a site too. We have a site on Instagram where we post our flyers.' (Morsal, YMW, DE)

The use of Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, WhatsApp and other communication and network channels and providers was mentioned widely and it became evident in the analysis that these serve not just as real-time fora for providing information about current developments, but also to communicate their activities and aspirations and to inform, educate, engage and 'recruit' other (young) people. Reaching other young people, spreading information (about events), disseminating and receiving information plus mobilising and organising others is key: 'It is unbelievably important: you are in permanent interaction, you receive a lot of information and send out a lot, by yourself. I cannot understand how people organised [...] without these media 40 years ago. Everything is centered around your mobile' (Lothar, AUT, DE). Blogs, videos and homepages are equally important for most young people and serve as a means for sharing information, self-organisation, communication and self-(re)presentation. These fora helped some respondents to become a role model, which

was also a means to increase the self-confidence and raise the aspirations for agency against stigmatisation and discrimination of other young people:

So I want to go big on Instagram. Because when I reach many people, I can motivate them. When I have many followers who support me I would like to make programmes where everyone will tell their story. And I would put that online, anonymously. (Necla, YMW, DE)

Furthermore, some young protagonists mentioned that the use of social media helps to create young and liberal online communities that are connected by their aspirations for social cohesion and participation and that speak out against discrimination and stigmatisation (SC, YMW, AUT). Social media provides the young people with an access to different ways of thinking; thoughts that are different or alternative to the mainstream media perceptions about societal developments and structures: 'So I think young people are... well they are; they are more liberal, yeah. And they're much more like open to like understanding and stuff' (Aladdin, SC, GB). Some also envisaged possible positive functions of social media and internet use such as fostering democratisation, liberal thinking and the development of a sense of self-responsibility and awareness among other people:

And you know, and people, maybe because they are behind that veil of the computer screen, they can be a bit more adventurous about what they say and what they look at. Maybe. Or they can have conversations with people; they can learn. You know, in an increasingly technologised world and increasingly digital world, there's greater access to information. There's greater ways to find out and learn about things. So I think that's maybe one of the reasons which is, that has sowed the seeds that has allowed to cultivate more and more kind of innovation from the youngsters. (Rafi, SC, GB)

On the other hand, some view social media rather sceptically. Participants voiced their concerns about how to manage the information overload and about media misinterpretations (No-TAV, AUT). The possibility of fuelling Islamophobic sentiments was mentioned, especially in the context of the representation of Muslims. Also discussed was the scrutiny to which young people are subjected, particularly via social media (SC, AUT). This can be a major barrier to engagement that disproportionately affects young people since they were born into the age of social media (see 3.2.9.).

3.3.4 Small scale social plans: Alternative lifestyles and interaction forms

Young people in our cases express their agency through affirmatively voicing their ideas for alternative ways of socialising and living together. They aspire also to improve local life-worlds and social structures in society by demonstrating how such alternatives can be lived out (see also 3.1.3.). Among our cases, groups such as No-TAV and the Autonomists create their own alternative lifestyles and forms of interaction drawing on DIY-styles, youth cultures and youth scenes, which mark them out symbolically from the 'average' population. Through this alternative style, these young people are able to connect with, and have an impact on, other young people's lifestyle orientation, political and cultural interests (Hitzler and Niederbacher, 2010: 32). Despite being an outlier in terms of their conservative values and norms, young people participating in new pro-citizen activism (NPCA) express agency in this way too:

[...] It really has an influence [...] people are grateful to you for doing this and it is really nice to hear that. And new people come along and we can see the work being done – people are finding out that it is possible to live in a different way.
(Alex, NPCA, RU)

The lived alternatives developed by respondents are based on values of solidarity, collectiveness and mutual support (see Section 3.1.3) and interaction with each other is guided by principles of equality and fairness. One of the common aspirations is to create a society that is based on social and ethical justice and that is grounded in moral values and trust. This has an altruistic dimension; the young people seek to make the local realities, their immediate surroundings and life-worlds, a better place not only for themselves but for everyone. This is framed, in most of the groups studied, as ‘a small scale social plan’ (No-TAV, SC, NIOT, YMW, AUT, HIV).

The friction between community and society (Tönnies 1887) is reproduced and recreated within all the researched groups in as much as these groups develop as collectives of individuals sharing the same aspirations, objections, (political) perceptions and values that are distinct from, or in opposition to, mainstream societal values and norms. In some groups (No-TAV, SC, NIOT, YMW, AUT), the world is envisaged through a paradigm of ‘us and them’ where ‘we’ constitute ‘community’ as opposed to ‘society’ and that community is characterised by ‘solidarity’ rather than ‘inequality’, ‘alternative lifestyle’ rather than ‘rules and restrictions’ and ‘no leaders’ rather than ‘power relations’. This ‘community’ is a reference point, bringing a sense of belonging (see also Sections 3.1.4. and 3.2.6.). In some cases - such as the Seto youth (EE) - this community is clearly distinguished from the hegemonic culture. Within these communities alternative and close interactional forms are created and emotional bonds, friendships and intergenerational relationships are (re)established: ‘(...) once there, there is this community belonging feeling that embraces you so much’ (Clara, No-TAV, IT). This gives rise to the development of specific spheres of communication within the emerging communities which centre on their own specific concerns and corresponding aspirations for participation.

3.3.5 Get up, stand up: Activities (against social injustice)

The young people in our study (with the exception of the Seto case) express their will to participate socially and politically through involvement in political, social and information events, including leisure activities and festivities, direct and indirect (political) action and activities, demonstrations and solidarity campaigns to help and support the oppressed and underprivileged. Most of these activities arise from conflicts and dialogues with authorities and their representatives. This can also include non-active and non-engaged youth; in some cases respondents in our study consciously distinguished themselves from such non-engaged youth, contrasting their own altruistic perceptions and aspirations with ‘their’ individualistic outlook (No-TAV, AUT, NPCA). Different forms of social capital (intergenerational, ethnic, family) help the young people to enact their activities and their efforts for social and political participation. Participation takes place through interactions, dialogues and discussions of proposals with authorities and institutions (NIOT, SC, HIV), but also by rejecting these interactions and dialogues and finding alternative ways of reaching out and expressing the groups’ own social and political ambitions (No-TAV, AUT, NPCA). A lack of trust in authorities and institutions amongst certain groups of activists hinders official

forms of participation and cooperation with such authorities (No-TAV, AUT, NPCA).

Agency is generated whenever young people in our study experience or encounter social injustice. These encounters can be direct - the young people themselves are disadvantaged or stigmatised for having particular ethnic, (sub-)cultural or social attributes - or indirect, that is other groups are treated unfairly (see also 3.2.1.). The result is a variety of activities that target social justice and fight against stigmatising and discriminating practices, policies and the architects of those policies. Agency and participation is directed at the improvement of the life of the underprivileged, the stigmatised and those being discriminated against, as summarised by one activist from Slovakia: 'I have been trying to be active as a citizen, especially lately. I am trying to contribute to the democratisation of society and I am trying to fight a bit against the existing stereotypes in society' (M.D., NIOT, SK). Gustav (AUT, DE) explains this in a more concrete way, describing how he took direct action to help refugees by 'standing at the station at night giving out hot drinks' and 'organising ferry tickets and letting people sleep here'.

The activities reflect aspirations for participation that *oppose* specific societal and political developments and structures. Respondents seek to intervene in these developments and structures in order to make their own life worlds better and/or to improve their own living conditions and those of other underprivileged groups of persons. Most aspirations for participation and agency of the young people in the cases we investigated are directed against structures facilitating different forms of injustice, repression, oppression, criminalisation, discrimination, prejudice, stigmatisation, racism and social inequality. These forms of engagement are to a certain extent altruistically motivated; the young people are trying to make the world and the local realities a better place for all to live in. The activities of others and of other political groups continue to create agency and activities, including for the respondents in our case studies. For some groups the stimulus for their own activities comes from those of other groups and (extremist) parties (AUT, NIOT).

A range of activities and events form the social and cultural capital¹¹ necessary to realise the young people's aspirations; some of the organised activities the respondents talked about included public events, festivals, open fora, (round table) discussions, info cafes, living libraries, a 'first aid' kit for those with HIV. These were either organised under the umbrella of local and national networks or individually by a local group. Regular and more or less formalised meetings and events were held in most groups, whereas others socialised mainly informally in loose peer-groups. Some groups also exchanged ideas and cooperated with public bodies (NIOT, HIV), official institutions and well established NGOs mainly in the local context (No-TAV) while others also participated, or were a major force, in nationwide network building for their cause (AUT). Some of these activities can be characterised as self-help group formations with the aim of helping people with disadvantages such as those who are HIV positive (HIV). Others might be characterised as loose or network-based group organisations to help socially and ethnically discriminated and disadvantaged people (YMW).

¹¹ Social and (sub)cultural capital are used here drawing on the use of these concepts in the work of Putnam (2000), Thornton (1998), Bourdieu (1983) and others interested in the reclamation and reorganisation of power in (different spheres of) public life. They refer to the social connections (and hierarchies) between individuals that promote civic virtue, culture and social cohesion and thereby tackle and resolve collective problems more easily.

Other ‘sophisticated’ activities expressing agency and participation and communicating for the group’s and the individual’s own purposes are theatre plays, artistic performances, work at local or university connected radio stations or information campaigns and activities at universities reaching a broad audience. These activities are (also) communicated via media to ensure the messages reached this broader audience:

[...] we had like a social media project, where [...] we’d encourage people to buy a meal for a homeless person [...] hear about their story and then like report their story on social media I think, over two hundred people got involved. And the Huffington Post did a small article on that and it was, it was mainly focused around the stigma pertaining to homeless people. But then they also, towards the end, mentioned [...] how it was encouraging that the Islamic Society was doing that, and, yeah, that was quite motivating in that sense, yeah. (Ashraf, SC, GB)

The intersectionality of social attributes leading to social injustice resulting in discrimination and unequal treatment of certain groups such as refugees, (female) Muslims, women, HIV-positive people and others was touched on discursively and treated with a certain amount of care and knowledge in most groups (SC, YMW, AUT, HIV). Helping or supporting underprivileged groups by showing solidarity and organising charity and other events was one focus of a range of activities throughout our sample (YMW, SC, AUT, HIV). Even the groups dealing with other local and national issues also referred to their attitude of solidarity and support for minority and discriminated segments of the population (No-TAV, NIOT).

3.3.6 Participation: the (in)capacity to act

The capacity to act is fundamental to the participation aspirations of individuals in this study. As outlined in Section 3.2, a range of individual, environmental and structural factors shape the capacity for agency and where those factors are absent or only weakly present – among our case studies this is exemplified by the young people from the Seto region – agency and participation is constrained. As discussed also in Section 3.1.6, respondents recognise the reciprocal relationship between participation and agency; a sense of agency facilitates participation but participation also increases young people’s capacity to act. This was narrated most frequently in relation to the personal learning and empowerment that respondents derived from their active engagement. Young people’s confidence, social and public speaking skills grew as a result of participating in open debates (SC, AUT, No-TAV) and, in some cases, educational trips were financed by the respondents’ own organisation (NPCA). In other cases, people simply learned from the everyday activities and interactions with those in their own groups and also with people and institutions outside them. Frauke (AUT, DE) felt what she had learned through her participation in the movement ‘you couldn’t learn in ten years at university’. Participation in activities is thus enabling; it can lead to the accumulation of social, symbolic, and/or cultural capital (NPCA) and even to future employment including possible careers in politics, the civil service or with NGOs (HIV, RU).

This does not mean respondents have an instrumental attitude to participation, however; participation was not about ‘CV building’ but achieving a sense of agency. This was particularly important for those young people whose everyday working life did not provide

the opportunity for meaningful action:

my present job is not intellectually satisfying, so I always find it cool if you can let off steam with an issue. Yeah, it really is cool when something works at some point and you achieve something for somebody or other. (Ferdi, AUT, DE)

It was also important to the young Muslim women in our study who often recounted their decision to wear the Muslim headscarf as a test of their own capacity to act. Making that choice, knowing the discrimination it would bring, signaled their rejection of the role of the victim and 'a sort of step, a proof [that] you're strong enough to achieve other things, so to speak' (Madiha, YMW, DE). It was an act which required them to summon up their own agency.

However, young people's aspirations to participation are experienced not only as capacity but also (perceived) incapacity to act. This incapacity is often associated with respondents' feelings and experiences of their own marginalisation, which evokes a desire for change:

if you've never felt [...] marginalised or anything like that, well then you don't feel the need to create change. Because you don't need anything to change, because actually none of these issues are affecting me. (Fiza, SC, GB)

This marginalisation is felt not only as result of specific social attributes but emerges from a range of processes and experiences of stigmatisation and criminalisation. It gives rise to uncertainty about one's capacity to act and doubt that the enactment of agency will change things (see also Section 3.2.3). Activists in our case studies in Germany (AUT), Italy, Russia and the UK all recounted experiences of criminalisation and repression that had led to disillusion and undermined their capacity, and will, to act. In the case of the Autonomists, the frequent representation of activists in this criminalised way had led to a general mistrust: 'They don't trust people they have never seen before' (Steffi, AUT, DE). Similar experiences of criminalisation through media and social media were reported by young people in the 'Suspect Communities' case (see Section 3.1.6) leading, in the case of Zuhair (SC, GB) to receiving 'death threats over the most random things'. Among both these groups (SC, AUT) there was widespread concern about surveillance by police and intelligence services and the possibility of being intimidated and attacked by political opponents.

In this context, not organising, not communicating and rejecting (official or institutional) offers to participate might also be understood as an act of agency and an aspiration for forms of 'latent' or 'indirect' participation (or engagement) distinct from classic patterns of civic, political or social participation (Walther, 2011). This is clearly evident in the case of young people from the Seto heritage region where the cultural marginalisation of non-Seto youth has led to a loss of belief in their capacity to act to resist the dominant cultural regime (see Section 3.1.1). While, on the surface, these young people, at best, passively resist their marginalisation and, at worst, simply leave the region in order to escape it, there is evidence also of an aspiration for agency. Attempts to disrupt Seto folk events from which they feel alienated (see Section 3.1.3) are illustrative here. However, in practice, these young people's apparent passivity works to further reinforce their inferior status in a region where they are already stigmatised for their lack of association with local heritage, or labelled 'Soviet', 'uncultured and rootless'.

This lack of recognition by institutions and authorities also undermines the capacity to act of young people in other cases. Activists in the moral order group of the NPCA felt their

attempts to change society for the better were misrecognised by police, authorities and the public as non-progressive and led to their stigmatisation as 'backward' (see also Section 3.1.1). HIV activists bemoaned the failure of well-known politicians to publicly recognise and support their cause (Alyona, HIV, RU) while the NIOT movement reported that assumptions about young people's incapacity to act prevented official institutions collaborating with them:

[...] many formal and informal authorities, they sort of have an inner prejudice about what young people can or cannot do. So, during one kind of negotiation, when we were trying to sort out the Amphitheatre, we were often met by the assumption that young people shouldn't be interfering in this. (R.S., NIOT, SK)

However, as emphasised throughout this report, structure and agency are interdependent (Giddens, 1984) and thus these very constraining structures often invoked, rather than suppressed, agency. Rafi's (SC, GB) determination to turn the powerlessness he felt in the face of wrongful arrest into a positive social action (see Section 3.1.5) is a classic illustration of this. Moreover, groups in our study such as No-TAV and the Autonomists embrace their stigmatisation as 'radicals' or 'stone throwers' and 'use' and decontextualise the stigma to promote discussion on the issues they care about and, they hope, bring about the social change they desire.

4. Conclusion

'Stigmatisation' and 'misrecognition' are more than the accumulation of negative representations of individuals or groups. They reflect the configuration of power relations – primarily social in the first case, primarily political in the second – that underpin the institutionalisation of the labelling of specific groups as unworthy of respect in such a way as 'to produce and reproduce social inequality' (Tyler and Slater, 2018: 721) and deny them the opportunity to participate equally in social life (Fraser, 2008: 84).

However, contrary to classical assumptions, young people who experience such stigma or misrecognition – and the conflict with authority that accompanies it – also have agency to create their own 'unofficial' (political) power to resist it. This was demonstrated by the actions of young people studied in this report who deployed their agency to challenge different forms of stigmatisation, misrecognition and prejudice about their own groups but also the stigmatisation of others. The challenge they presented, moreover, was not only to 'representations' but to policies – and the agents of those policies – that created or reproduced the associated social injustice.

A diverse range of actions to challenge stigmatisation, misrecognition and injustice are in evidence across the young people studied here. For some groups, real change can only come about if the 'system' itself is challenged. However, for all groups, 'doing small things' mattered, not least in order to develop a sense of efficacy and sustain social involvement. Central to the activism of many – although not all – groups is the sense of community and solidarity, which act as a stimulus to, but also an outcome of, social involvement. The nature of the communities and solidarities constructed are also a conscious response to the norms of contemporary society, which respondents experienced as individualistic, competitive and,

in some cases, corrosive. Alternative lifestyles and communities were built around solidarity, equality and mutual respect; in some cases they also had strong counter-cultural roots and practices of extra-systemic living involving the development of infrastructures and resource bases to support that alternative way of living.

Another important finding of this cross-national study is the centrality of ethical and emotional dimensions of social involvement. A prerequisite for social involvement was a deep emotional concern about social justice. In terms of young people's own activism, this often translated into understanding their involvement as a moral obligation and was articulated as 'doing the right thing'. In some cases doing the 'right' thing was linked to a belief that social involvement was a way of enacting God's will. However, it might also be a more general feeling that you had responded to the challenges of the day in an ethically proper way; you had stood 'on the right side of history' as one respondent put it. Coupled with the strategy of taking 'small steps' and seeking to 'change just one person's life', this kind of moral or ethical texture to everyday political and social participation is indicative of wider evidence that young people understand and enact politics not in traditional, ideologically driven ways but through micro political practice driven by individual constellations of ethical and moral issues (Manning, 2013).

Emotional connection was also important in the process of becoming, and remaining, socially involved. Thus, as noted above the concern that something was 'wrong' or 'unjust' was often a key motivating factor in first becoming engaged not least as a process of recognising that what was felt, at first, as an individual hurt is actually a structural or societal problem affecting one's group as a whole (Honneth, 1995: 164). The sense of solidarity generated in the process of coming together to challenge the stigmatisation subsequently becomes central to staying active; as documented above, the sense of well-being in the group is crucial to remaining involved. However, while most cases in this analysis brought people together in identity groups that facilitated a sense of belonging and well-being – and those effects are amplified by the sense of collectivity, feeling accepted and having an activist 'family' – communities can also have negative impacts. When organised around specific identity criteria, those who do not 'fit' may be, or feel, excluded while cultural codes and everyday practices can make participation, for those who do not/cannot follow them, difficult. Moreover internal disputes in the community can lead to exit from activism or splits within the group.

It should also be noted that even if respondents, sometimes, narrate activism as a 'choice' and distinguish themselves positively from those who are 'passive', in reality some people have more opportunity and capacity to become active than others. That capacity is shaped by a range of structural and individual enablers and barriers to social involvement. While the emotional concern about social justice might be the starting point for engagement, in order for the response to this to move beyond unfocused anger and frustration (which might lead to individual delinquency, collective acts such as rioting or simply to withdrawal or depression) other factors must be in place. These include an alternative vision of society (guided by specific conceptual moral values, political ideas etc.) but also a sense of self-efficacy. Such efficacy is born of experience of the efficacy of action but also the confidence, knowledge and networks (social and cultural capital) that is strongly associated with socio-economic advantage (in terms of educational opportunity, employment, income, gender and ethnic background).

In a number of cases, the experience of stigma itself appeared as a resource to act and to stimulate social innovation and social change. However, it is also important to recognise that, while the structures that subordinate do not prevent young people from 'doing something' or 'challenging attitudes', the institutional response may not be to yield or respond positively. That response may, on the contrary, work to re-embed the stigma or misrecognition young people's action sought to counter. The stories recounted here by the young Muslim women in one of our studies are the most illustrative; adopting the Muslim headscarf as part of a reconnection with their religion and a challenge to the misrecognition of their Muslim identity can lead to a compounding of stigmatisation. Similar experiences were also reported, however, by other groups such as the Autonomists and No-TAV, not least through the criminalisation of their active responses to the injustice they encountered. On the other hand, choosing passive resistance over action also fails to address the structural forces of subordination; as we have seen in this report, the quiet resentment of their cultural marginalisation among young people who reject the dominant Seto heritage in their region, effectively reproduces their social subordination.

The fact that resistance does not always lead to destigmatisation but can restigmatise or compound stigmatisation is an important lesson; as respondents in our study themselves note, young people may have agency but they exercise it in conditions not of their own making. Participation is not only about the desire of young people to engage but the willingness of society to open itself to that engagement.

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Project Identity

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