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Living to Tell the Tale: Making sense of the field of young activism

A qualitative approach to young activism in a major German city

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Para Betty, por enseñarme a leer,

*La vida es un baile, y con el tiempo damos
la vuelta (Diomedes Díaz)*

My deepest gratitude, respect, and admiration goes out to all my interviewees who were kind enough to trust me with their memories.

I am also fortunate to have worked next to very gifted and competent colleagues who have, without a question, helped me grow...

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1 List of Abbreviations

JR- Youth Ring

RPJ- Ring of Political Youth

FFF- Fridays For Future

HF – Hambach Forest

JUSOS – SPD Youth- Wing (Junge Sozialisten)

JU CDU Youth (Junge Union)

ASTA – Student Union

JEF Young European Federalists

GTM – Grounded Theory Methodology

RMT – Resource Mobilisation Theory

SAF – Strategic Action Fields

MLY –Migrant Labour Youth (pseudonym given to Murad’s organisation)

EL – Einfach Leben (pseudonym given to Thomas’ organisation)

WG – Women’s Group (pseudonym given to Anna’s organisation)

IGMJ –IG-Metall Youth

2 Introduction

Life is not the one you have lived, but the one you remember to tell your friends. García Márquez sentenced this as he published his memoirs, one of the last books published by the celebrated writer. Perhaps as a warning that the memoir wasn't entirely concerned with the exactness of facts but with the exercise of remembering. This thesis uses Straussian GTM (Strauss/ Corbin 2008) to present an analytical account of the spaces and dynamics of young activism based on the memories and interpretations of 17 protagonists.

The methodology and analysis are supported by interactionist assumptions that the meanings and interpretations attached to situations affect people's actions towards them, and that actors are constantly reinforcing and shaping their own (and other people's) identities through interaction (Blumer 1980, Snow 2001, Crossley 2003). Specifically, this work parts from the assumption that understanding interpretations and memories can yield valuable insights in the study of sustained participation (Crossley 2003, 2004, Passy/ Giugni 2000, Bosi 2012). In that sense, the facts here are the facts as the interviewees recall them; and the events and circumstances they link are in themselves a source of meaning in that they reveal how they make sense of different contextual situations and actors. The subjective and contingent character with which many of the interviewees described the spaces of young activism, meant that the theory of Strategic Action Fields (SAF) as proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) was a suitable theoretical lens to inform this study. Their proposed idea of SAF is more strongly defined by a subjective recognition than by official and objective stands; this is something that became clear as, at some point during the data collection, the interviewees started insistently mentioning the Fridays For Future network as a relevant actor in these spaces of youth participation. Additionally, this analysis is also informed by the concept of habitus, particularly Crossley's concept of radical habitus. These expansions to Bourdieu's theory were developed for the study of social movements and propose concepts that more carefully consider the role of reflection and attempt to account for stability and change (Crossley 2003, 2004, 2004, Fligstein/ McAdam 2012).

The findings are presented in two analytical chapters; the first one conceptualises the SAF of local young activism; introducing the spaces, conditions, the poles, and some of the dynamics as described by the interviewees. Moreover, this chapter explores the field in its relational dimension, namely, as a field of action which is, at the same time, embedded within other SAFs but also made up of smaller and more specialised SAFs. Following this, I propose an internal structure of the field based on two axes (poles of contentious-conform, and pole of professional-spontaneous). The conceptualisation of these poles is based on what the interviewees revealed about their organisations: ways of doing things (organisational and professional) types of attitudes and interpretations they have of activism. The chapter locates the

organisations and the activists within the SAF of young activism, following their own descriptions of their mindset and repertoires of action. Following this, this chapter explores the SAF and its closing mechanisms. Given that it is not a professional SAF with clearly marked boundaries (it is in fact rather blurred, and unstable) the closing mechanisms have to do with access to specific material and symbolic forms of capital. The hurdles described by the interviewees are conceptualised using Bourdieu's concepts of cultural, financial and symbolic capital.

The second chapter focuses on the individual activists and their self-described process of becoming activists; incorporating forms of cultural capital, as well as networks, routines, frames, and a taste for organised action. Based on the analysis of the data, this chapter presents two ideal-typical trajectories (abeyant-experimental, lineal- consistent). Following this, I explore the transformations that activists connect to their activism and propose ideal-typical forms of the activist habitus, which is based on the expectations, understandings of activism, repertoires of action and presence in the field (through a single affiliation, through disperse networks, through multiple parallel affiliations, etc). The activist habitus is conceptualised along two axes: the contentious- conform, and the liquid-solid. Following the precept that the habitus is developed through sustained interaction in a community of practice, the second chapter links the spaces they have occupied within the SAF of young activism, with their own personal trajectories, their trajectories in activism and the development of their forms of activist habitus. As mentioned earlier, the working definitions of habitus and field are guided by the expansions of these concepts published by Crossley (2003) and Fligstein and Mc Adam (2012).

2.1 Presentation of the Problem

A quick glance at the theoretical chapter reveals that the topic of young participation has been amply studied by social scientists. Numerous works have focused on protest behaviour (Crossley 2003, 2004) on the changing nature of political action (Spannring et al 2009, Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Norris 2002) in the post-industrial societies. Moreover, it has also been widely argued that participation is important for democratic regimes (Gaiser 2010, Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Spannring et al 2008, Hooghe/ Winkelfield 2008, Mill 2008) and the declining participation of the young has been an issue of significant debates (Putnam 2000, Dalton 2017). The masses of work on this topic strongly suggest that the picture is more nuanced and that we enter different and more complex definitions and approaches to the participation that go well beyond participation in unions and parties and include protest, petitioning but also issue-based activism, life-style politics, conscious consumerism, etc. (Van Deth 2014, Norris 2002, Pickard 2019).

Just to illustrate this, one of my interviewees talked about people who were "bike-politically" active, implying that they use bikes, create exchange systems and communities around this as an environmental

statement but also as a demand for a more democratic use of urban space. There are numerous initiatives like this one and vast numbers of collectives working on specific issues.

If the last years of social science research have taught us anything about studying participation is that the definition can be tricky. (Gerdes 2020, Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Van Deth 2014). This risk comes from the chance that the definitions end up being either so limited, that they miss a big part of the picture and sacrifice robustness, or that they are too broad and loses its meaning altogether (Van Deth 2014). Furthermore, Gerdes (2020) stressed the challenge in defining specific social groups: what constitutes young? Migrant? How are we defining gender identities?

Considering this, it is worthwhile to reflect about the working definition of participation. This work is based on an expanded view of political participation inspired by Van Deth (2014), Pickard (2019), Tarrow (2008) and Dalton (2017) that addresses either state actors, or citizens or both in order to promote change either through institutionalised mechanisms of action, or through bottom-up pressure, or by promoting grass-roots connections, small-scale solutions, and a shift in cultural values. Furthermore, this study investigates specifically sustained and collective participation (Fillieule/ Neveu 2019, Corrigan- Brown 2020): it studies young people who have been politically engaged with one or more groups for at least two years during which they have been constantly interacting with the group (s), learning repertoires of action and deliberation. Their self-declared experiences and interpretations are here analytically reconstructed based on the field-habitus theoretical toolbox (Bourdieu 1984, Crossley 2003, 2004, Fligstein/ McAdam 2012). To the question of definitions, I would add, that the labels included in this work were those that the activists gave to themselves: those labelled migrant, or female, male were those activists who identified as such.

This analysis is closer to the works that have focused on trajectories or activist careers (Bosi Bosi and Della Porta, Corrigan-Brown 2012, 2012b, Fillieule/ Neveu 2019) and it approaches not only the question of retention, why do they stay (Bunnage 2014, Passy/ Giugni 2000) but also the question of what it ultimately means for them to stay, in terms of their identities, their networks, their plans. Furthermore, this analysis explores how they and the local stakeholders are making sense of the dynamics of local activism.

Since this study concentrates on sustained activism, the activists have been engaged in communities of action that (albeit following different paths) pursue the goal of gaining support and visibility for their groups (in other word they compete for legitimacy) as they seek to generate societal change, which can be either substantial societal or moderate and incremental. Additionally, this is built on a self-recognition of interviewees who see themselves as people who are politically active within specific collectives and who share a belief in the necessity of coordinated collective action in maintaining (or expanding) democracy and bringing about social change. The “political” discussions were, for most of the

interviewees, not limited to the instances and practices of representative democracy, but they included debates about the environment, identities, about the access to public space, alternative lifestyles, inequality, access to culture and housing, and also about elections and political representation.

Furthermore, the “young” people in this study were people that could be classified as part of the millennials and GenZ generations (Fitri 2021, Andretta/ Della Porta 2020). The young activists were 18- 35 at the time, but their analyses of the field also mention slightly younger peers. This generational category is flexible and mostly indicative. What it indicates is that the analyses here presented refer to people who have been socialised under certain structural, cultural, and political conditions (Manheim 1936, Grasso et al 2017, 2018, Sloam / Henn 2019) and how these basic conditions shape their politicisation. Naturally, as studies of specific cohorts do, this study acknowledges that young people are also strongly shaped by numerous other factors (class, gender, ethnicity, religious background, urban/ rural background, education, etc.) and that these will greatly shape how they make sense to the afore mentioned conditions and social norms. Considering all this, this study parts from an expanded (but not unlimited) understanding of sustained participation in order to present an analytical explanation of spaces, dynamic and meanings of sustained activism of millennials and GenZ across different ideological, gender and class identities.

This generational framework means that these are activists that were born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (considering the spans of both generations: 1981- 1996, 1997 onwards). This means that most of them have either only known unified Germany, considering that even the ‘older’ ones in these generations were still children at the time of the unification. Certainly, they all came of age in a unified country that hadn’t had wars at home in decades and the younger ones have come of age in the time of a unified Europe and open borders. Additionally, the members of these generations, especially those who grew up in urban areas, have grown up in increasingly diverse environments where migrant backgrounds are not really a rarity and Ms Merkel has been a ruling figure for a significant part of their adult lives¹. Furthermore, these generations have grown up in the time of globalisation and increased mobility and exchange, and most recently, they have been politically active in times of social media, when activists can easily access, interpret, and appropriate (or reject) global discussions and adapt them to their local contexts. The rapid expansion of the Black Lives Matters protests around the world and the impressive growth of the FFF movement since 2018 are salient examples of this. Additionally, the growth of the FFF also shows the paramount role of social media not only in helping activists access information but to present themselves, in their own term, without the intervention of gatekeepers from

¹See:

<https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/Forschung/Veroeffentlichungen/Migrationsbericht2019/PersonenMigrationshintergrund/personenmigrationshintergrund-node.html>

the media. These generations came of age in the post-9-11 world which marked the start of the global war on Terror, including the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, which continue to shape political discourses to this day. The protests against the Iraq war were an important trigger of political interest for some of those who were in their late adolescence at the time.

Certainly, one of the defining structural traits for these generations have been the last three decades of neoliberalism, with the gradual dismantling of the Welfare State and the shock that came after the financial crisis (Andretta/ Della Porta 2020, Zamboni/ Fernández González 2017). To greater or lesser degrees, these generations have been shaped by the precarization of the labour market and the increasing gentrification of urban areas which have been the subject of intense protest and discussions. In Germany, this gradual reduction of the Welfare State and the increased precarization of the labour market has been linked to the implementation of the Agenda 2010, which sought to create a more flexible and dynamic labour market. This plan, spearheaded by the Social Democratic government at the time, implemented cuts in the unemployment programmes as well as the pensions and healthcare system². While Germany wasn't as badly affected by the 2008 crisis as other European countries (Zamponi/ Fernández González) where the crisis led to massive protests, there is a general assumption that (this was something many interviewees said) inequality has been on the rise and that the labour market, particularly for the young, has significantly deteriorated because the share of part-time, free-lance or precarious workers has significantly increased. These impressions have also been documented by the SGD Watch. (see: the report by SGG Watch Europe [3.3.a-report-DE.pdf \(sdgwatcheurope.org\)](#)).

According to the Shell Youth Study 2019³, young people in Germany are usually interested in politics and satisfied with democracy, still, the study points at differences between East and West Germany, between youngsters with migrant backgrounds and those without migrant backgrounds, between females and males and, lastly, political interest seems to be higher among university students than among those enrolled in apprenticeships. Likewise, this study shows that young people are worried about the future of the labour market and about the potential effects of the environmental crisis.

As an additional note, I would like to stress that this work is not about the position of youngsters within the classical frameworks of left-right political positions. These positions, pervasive in popular culture and academia, have been discussed, updated, and questioned (Bauer et al 2017, Kroh 2007, Knudsen 1995) and continue to be valuable in classifying and comparing political positions. Nonetheless, this sample is relatively concentrated around centre/ centre-right to left wing positions, including some activists whose positions are far more ambiguous. In that sense it doesn't offer sufficient contrast or

² See: [A Quick Guide To 'Agenda 2010' | Germany | News and in-depth reporting from Berlin and beyond | DW | 17.10.2003](#)

³ See: Shell Jugendstudie 2019 [shell_jugendstudie_2019_CC2018.indd](#)

robustness for a left-right analysis. Even more, this study seeks to primarily understand how activists see themselves and the spaces of activism and considering that it deals with expanded definitions of politics. Therefore, this study analysed interpretations of activism and positions in a field that is dynamic.

2.2 The timing

Timing is everything. And in this case, even more so. Had the project started a couple of years earlier, the interviews would have coincided with the height of the refugee crisis and the strong anti-migrant backlash represented by the electoral success of the AfD and by the actions organised by groups like Pegida. On the other hand, if the data collection had started two years later than it did, it would have matched the Covid crisis, the protests against mask mandates, vaccines and confinements. Even more, it could have matched the last stages of the Merkel era and the preface of the electoral campaign. But it didn't. The data collection didn't match either one of these crises. It was done during the calm between the storms.

Nonetheless, it was, among others, the time when the FFF movement started. The swift rise and expansion of the Fridays For Future movement meant that, without planning on this, I interviewed two members of the network and the movement became an important referent for many interviewees. The FFF network managed to secure support from numerous networks and organisations in the city and quickly expanded beyond pupils. The strikes led to intense discussions at the local and national level about the validity of this action: some politicians considered this inappropriate while others were more open and even met with the movements' leaders. Similarly, 2018 saw important discussions around the protests at the Hambach Forest where activists tried to prevent coal mining by RWE. These protests were far more controversial than the FFF. The involvement of some interviewees in the Hambach Forest protests also brought these events into the conversation and led some of them to opine about the correct ways of posing demands, and others about the passive attitude of politicians towards the environmental crises.

In general, the time of the interviews was not marked by a single super crisis (like the financial crisis, the refugee crisis or the recent and still ongoing Covid crisis) but it was certainly shaped by several local, regional, and national debates. Perhaps one of the dominant topics of contention was the environmental crisis and some further ones related to the use of urban spaces: from housing to the rights of the local squats and the availability of open, public and free (or affordable) places for people to meet.

Even if topics like the HF or the FFF protests, the rights of local squats to stay in the city and others permeated the conversations, the interviews didn't focus on a specific cycle of protest or issue area. In general, they tried to understand how it is that activists were making sense of activism as a practice, as a community and as a part of their lives, and how the stakeholders interpreted the dynamics of activism. To that extent, this work tackles not a protest or a specific crisis but the dynamics of sustained activism, even those that involve making sense and framing current problems but also the reproduction work of keeping networks, organisations, and initiatives alive.

At the time of the interviews, the CDU was not only the governing party at the national level, but also in this federal state and was part of the governing coalition in the city. At the time I am writing, we know for a fact that the CDU will no longer be a part of the governing coalition at the national level but retained their position at the regional and local level. This opens a new era for some of the activists (those who address political actors with their actions) who might be reconfiguring some of their discourses and strategies.

3 Methodology

This dissertation presents a qualitative case-study of young activism in a major German city. The aim of the study is to provide rich data and a theoretical explanation about how young activists become such, about how they are experiencing activism and how actors involved are making sense of the structural, personal and organisational factors around young political engagement. The analysis of the data was conducted following the premises of Straussian GTM (Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 1998, 2008) and the storyline was split into two main analytical chapters.

This study is based on the analysis of 17 semi-structured interviews conducted between 2018 and 2019 in a major German city. In order to protect the identity of the interviewees, especially of those who hold positions of leadership within their organisations or in district authorities, I have decided to withhold the name of the city and, naturally, the name of local neighbourhoods and districts. Furthermore, I used pseudonyms instead of the actual names of the interviewees. The names of those organisations that operate in different cities have been kept in the document but the names of smaller and very local organisations have been changed. This is all indicated in the glossary of abbreviations.

The interviews fall into three categories; biographic interviews with young activists (8) expert interviews (4) and interviews with organisational representatives (5). The interview guidelines are attached to this chapter. The interview guidelines as the interviews themselves were developed and selected from the sample of interviews conducted by the German team as part of work packages 3 and 6 of the EURYKA Project.

3.1 The EURYKA Project and this dissertation

This dissertation is deeply tied to the EURYKA Project (Reinventing Democracy in Europe: Youth Doing Politics in Times of Increasing Inequalities-GA 727025) which was conducted by a consortium of researchers from nine European universities. The project was developed between January 2017 and January 2020, and was composed of eight working packages, each with a specific methodology and objective. Overall, the project sought to provide data about the opportunities, instances, discourses surrounding young participation in Europe. Besides this, it had an emphasis in the relation between inequalities, political innovation, and participation of young people. The base for this dissertation is the qualitative component of the EURYKA project, namely the interviews conducted for the work packages 6 and 3. For this reason, this dissertation combines steps of deductive and inductive reasoning (Göringer 2021); the design of the interview guidelines and the use of pre-coding schemes and common standards for the project reports involved not only seeking specific type of information (given the project's aim but also by the knowledge of the existing literature and theories) but also it gave some guidelines into

the direction of the data analysis. On the other hand, the in-depth line to line analysis of the selected and transcribed interviews allowed for much more openness in terms of the emerging results.

3.1.1 WP 6 and the biographic interviews

The biographic interviews analysed in this work were part of the total sample collected for the WP6 of the EURYKA Project. This work package focused on individual trajectories of young activists (ages 18-35) as foreseen by the GA the aim was “to examine the individual trajectories of young people since their childhood in order to see how they influence their ways of doing politics and how inequalities are lived by, and (re-) acted upon, by individual young people in different country and socio-economic contexts”⁴. In that sense, the WP foresaw a sampling that captured variation among young people engaged in different kinds of organisations. This WP foresaw a total of 252 in-depth interviews or 28 in-depth biographic interviews per country. The goal was to gather rich data about the values, expectations, motivations and attitudes of young activists across Europe.

The WP defined a purposive sampling to ensure maximum variations followed by a snow-ball procedure so that researchers gained access to new potential interviewees through those already interviewed. Furthermore, the instructions for this WP also specified that each national team should select one city (urban context) that had a university and socio-political activity. After this, the teams followed to select organisations within the following categories:

- Left libertarian organization/group (protest groups/ protests/movement of the squares/squat)
- Informal Citizens/grassroots solidarity initiatives and networks of solidarity/social economy
- C)Feminist organization/group or LGTBQ
- Student organization
- Right wing political party (main stream)/ youth branch.
- Left wing political party (main stream)/ youth branch.
- *Greenpeace*

Optional:

- Labour Union

These initial categories were expected to provide comparability (between the national samples) but also ensure enough diversity in terms of the orientations, size, structure and trajectory of the different groups. teams were expected to interview at least four individuals from each organisation. The individual activists were selected “based on age, gender, educational level as well as socio-economic and ethnic background”. For this purpose, researchers were expected to start with those activists initially suggested by the organisation and continue gathering interviewees by following a snow-ball method.

⁴ As stated on the work package instructions distributed by the coordinating team.

The activists for this work package were contacted through different mechanisms; initially, they were contacted via email or through the organisations' Facebook site. For this purpose, I sought directly the websites/ Facebook sites of the specific local groups, in the case of larger organisations that are represented nation-wide in Germany. The organisations that replied to my initial request often asked for more precise details about the project and announced they would need time to deliberate about the convenience of participating. Following a second email with more detailed information (in particular regarding the anonymization and the protection of privacy) I received the contact information of activists who were willing to participate. I often asked the interviewees to suggest other potential interviewees. Some of them did, others sent me their suggestions after they had consulted with their peers and others refused to give me data directly, but rather suggested me to attend their events or send new messages to the groups' coordination. In the case of the less structured and more informal groups, it was more difficult to reach out solely via email and, thus, visiting their events proved helpful in establishing rapport with some of its members. Additionally, by suggestion of an interviewee I asked to be included in a local mailing list for activists, which was also valuable in establishing contact with the less structured organisations and in gaining their trust. Accessing the squat and some of the less formalised organisations raised two main difficulties: one, that they didn't reply messages very fast, and the second one that some of the members were sceptical about doing interviews with researchers (or any interviews, for that matter) because they claimed that previous interviewers had misrepresented their testimonies and created a distorted image of them or their organisations. Because of this, it was important to establish rapport and ensure that identities would be protected and interviewees had the liberty to stop the interview at any time or ask for certain parts not to be mentioned.

For this work-package, I selected the following organisations:

- JUSOS
- JU
- Student Union
- *Greenpeace*
- *IG Metall*
- *Einfach Leben*⁵
- Feminist/ LGTBQ network
- Local squat⁶

Additional interviews with activists from *Zero Waste*, and with a former member of the JUSOS were also conducted. In this process, I conducted a total of 32 interviews.

⁵ This name has been changed in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.

⁶ Due to the acquired commitments to protect the identity of the interviewees, some of the groups cannot be named and therefore a pseudonym will be used to refer to the organisation.

The interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire divided in ten thematic blocs including the following topics:

- life before participation (family, friends, school experiences, social engagement, etc.)
- Enrolment (selection, initial stage, changes)
- sustained/ shifting / suspended activism (this section dealt with what happened after enrolment: did they remain, switch, disengage and the personal and organisational reasons for these developments)
- Impact (on their personal relations, skills, views, expectations)
- Future (personal goals and specific expectations regarding activism),
- socio-demographic information (place of birth, parents' place of origin, occupation, parents' occupation, age, educational level).

The interviews started and ended with open questions; the initial was "Can you tell me something about yourself?" and the closing question was "Would you like to add anything?". The interview guidelines had two columns one with open questions and a second one with follow-up questions to ask in case interviewees didn't provide much information. In sum, the questionnaires posed questions that allowed researchers to get an up-close look at personal trajectories and how interviewees made sense of the micro, meso and macro influences in their own activism.

The interviews were conducted at the places suggested by activists and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The instructions for this work package also included drafting a short summary after each interview, filling a table with a pre-coding scheme (see: annex) and completing trajectory maps. These pre-coding enabled the (initial) identification of trends, shared values, shared conceptions, contending ideas about political activism, about the city and its problems. Moreover, this pre-coding stage unveiled some differences and similarities in terms of the personal and activist trajectories, and how these related to the type of organisations they militated in. The project requested for a work-package report to describe the main traits in terms of backgrounds, parental roles, effects, experience with the political opportunity structure, views of the city and youth problems, views of activism and repertoires of action among others. This report revealed a diverse landscape with some highly-structured and well-established organisations (like the political parties, the workers' union, *Greenpeace*) and other more horizontal and spontaneous organisations. Some of the most salient traits revealed by the pre-coding schemes, the trajectory diagrams and the summaries that aided the drafting of the reports were:

Environmentalism was a very salient issue for the interviewees. At least half of the interviewees recognise environmental projects and initiatives as key instances in their political socialisation and their first enrolment. Because of this, and because of the salience of environmental discussions at the time of the interviews, even those who were not directly environmental activists, felt like taking a position and stating their support for environmental initiatives.

There was a (relative) consensus in regards to the city and what it has to offer to young activism: the vast majority of the interviewees see the city as an open and diverse city with varied instances and spaces of participation for young people. Still, all interviewees recognised that the city, and the possibilities of political activism, were strongly shaped by important inequalities (income, education, ethnic discrimination). The testimonies differed in the salience and the effects attributed to these inequalities.

Interviewees identified specific districts and areas in the city in which people were more profoundly affected by the above-mentioned inequalities.

Interviewees also identified the lack of affordable housing in the city, urban mobility, the perceived differences between the three school-types as important problems affecting youth.

Almost all interviewees recognise the influence of their parents on their political socialisation but almost all of them enrolled after they had left their parents' house.

Most of the interviewees reported that their first enrolment occurred after they started a new life-stage: often after starting university, or starting a new job, moving to a new city, etc.

Many of the activists had attended occasional demonstrations before enrolling in an organisation. The exception to this were the JU activists and two of the JUSOS activists.

School and university politics (speaker positions, assemblies, councils, etc.) were important instances "getting a taste for politics" for at least half of the activists interviewed. This was more important for those in political parties, student union and some of the environmental activists.

The importance and the role of school in political socialisation and in triggering political interest was varied. At least half of them claimed that their politics classes were boring and too focused on the structural and hegemonic aspects of politics. Others had particularly engaged teachers who managed to inspire interesting conversations.

Activists had different ways of being so: some of them militated in a single organisation whereas other liked to alternate between different groups and organisations.

Their conception of participation varied as well as their repertoires of action.

A few of the activists had also been initiators: they had started their own grass-roots organisations after they had spent time in a larger organisation.

The data showed different activist profiles: repertoires of action, views of activism, as well as types of trajectories.

More than half of the interviewees pointed at “language barriers” as an important obstacle for more political participation and activism.

Most of the interviewees argued that activist circles tend to be very homogeneous in terms of socio-economic, educational and even ethnic backgrounds. The common stereotype was that it is mostly university or grammar school educated, middle-class people who dominate activist circles and that people of migrant descent are very underrepresented.

People of migrant descent, those with no university degrees and of working-class families see themselves as the exception within activist circles.

Among the partisan activists, parental influence was key; they all reported about having parents who were interested in politics, voted, followed news and sympathised with the same party. Additionally, many of the partisan activists admit that their parents had been members or supporters of the party. It was more common for partisan activists to have parents involved in social or religious engagement.

All of them felt comfortable calling themselves activists.

Since topics such as environmental issues, language barriers, lack of diversity in activist circles were salient from the first interviews, I asked about these issues on the following interviews and contrasted the responses. These initial findings and the pre-coding scheme were the base of the selection of the interviews that were analysed in depth for this work. These interviews were completed following a purposive sampling that sought to capture richness and diversity of experience, and occasionally, a convenience sampling responding basically to those who were willing to take part on an interview.

3.1.2 WP 3 organisational and expert interviews

The aim of this work package was to explore the organisational opportunities for young engagement. Hence this work- package was made up of two elements: a quantitative analysis of 4,500 organisational Websites and a qualitative leg consisting of 270 interviews with organisational representatives and stakeholders. Both elements approach the potential instances of engagement, the innovation, and also the influence of the political opportunity structure. The qualitative element sought to gather thick descriptions of the experiences/ strategies of youth engagement as well as the social, political and discursive context (see: EURYKA Project WP3 report page 62). These interviews were conducted in the same cities as those for work package 6: a large urban area with universities and socio-political activity.

Each team was expected to conduct at least 20 semi-structured interviews with youth-lead or youth-dedicated organisations (organisations that specifically have young people as their target audience). Researchers were expected to follow a purposive sampling in order to ensure richness and variety in profile, size, activity and experience and to follow a snow-ball procedure, thus gathering further contacts from the initial interviewees. The selection of these organisation was expected to maintain a balance between youth-lead and youth-dedicated organisations and to capture as much diversity as possible in terms of size, structure, goals and scope, issues, etc. As dictated by the instructions of this work package, the selection of the organisations followed these criteria: “ The sectors in which they operate might vary, but the first criterion of selection is to centre only on those organizations that have a strong (but not necessarily exclusive) focus on participation, social and political inclusion of young adults: “Organizations will be selected taking into account their activities’ focus on social and political participation and degree of engagement with democratic innovation and experimentation (...)” (as defined by both the work-package instructions and the Grant Agreement. Furthermore, researchers were to follow the principle of saturation and switch sectors and approaches as soon as it became clear that the thematic categories were being saturated. The selection included: youth-wings of political parties, environmental groups, feminist organisations, LGTBQ groups, migrant organisations, religious organisations, etc.

In both cases, youth-lead and youth-oriented organisations, the goal was to interview people who could speak on behalf of the organisations; speakers, coordinators, directors and people who had been with the organisation long enough that they had gathered experience that allowed them to speak about the organisational strategies, projects and challenges. Therefore, the instructions for this work package contemplated the possibility of researchers contacting some of the activists interviewed for WP6 under the condition that a different time slot was used for the organisational questions. For this work package, I resorted to some of the contacts I had established in work package six: among others, I re-contacted Marius, Dilek, Juan and Ludwig. Some of the interviewees answered the biographic and the organisational questionnaires. In all of these cases, the interviews were conducted separately in two different appointments and the interviewees received an explanation of the difference between both dialogues. In addition to contacting some of the WP6 interviewees, I reached out to representatives or speakers of the organisations listed below.

- Junge Union (JU)
- Left Party (SDS)
- JEF (Young European Federalists)
- Student Union
- Trade Union (youth section)
- Viva con Agua
- Religious Organisation
- Migrant Labour Organisation (youth-lead)
- Migrant youth support

- Girls and Young women
- Youth and Media Organisation
- LGTBQ
- Artistic social network (project organised by young adults targeting adolescent and other young adults)
- Young explorers
- Girls and Young Women media lab
- Youth Centre

The organisational interviews included a few new categories with respect to the ones included in the WP6, as for example artistic organisations, religious organisations, migrant organisations.

The interview guidelines foresaw five thematic blocs including the following:

- Introduction of the group or organisation (as well as the interviewee's role within this group)
- Experience with Young Engagement
- Actions and Repertoires
- Societal context of young engagement
- Final: Is there anything important that we have not talked about, in order to understand the organisation's work on behalf of young people?

In addition to the organisational interviews, the work package included interviews with ten stakeholders defined as such by a concrete mandate related to youth participation and by a specific expertise in the field. The experts included: professional politicians with experience in youth topics, the local coordinator of the *Demokratie Leben* program, a representative from the coordination of youth for youth fora, the local youth- office, a coordinator of a job tester workshop for youngsters (private sector), the representative of the local youth ring, educators, researchers (focused on educational trajectories and migrants), coordinator of integration department and coordination for youth, among others. The selection of these experts followed these criteria:

- having a direct mandate related to youth and participation
- having direct experience in the city of inquiry
- maintaining diversity between sources and including people in different sectors: research, education, private sector, politics, civil society, religious organisations, media, etc.

The interview guidelines for the stakeholders included the following themes:

- Introduction of the group/ organisation/ sector
- Youth engagement in the city
- Local opportunities structures for young engagement
- Final Question: Is there anything important we have not talked about, in order to understand the work of your sector on behalf of young engagement?

As with the previous work package, the interviews conducted for work package three were analysed using field notes, memos and a pre-coding scheme which helped identify some common topics:

Inequalities are relevant when it comes to political and social participation

These inequalities were mostly connected with education and income, but some referred to aspects like gender, age, area of residence and ethnic origin.

The city is considered open and liberal and with numerous instances for social and political participation.

Still, many had the impression that some youngsters “couldn’t find the way”

Some interview partners had an overarching understanding of participation and inclusion that includes participation in the job market, social integration and political participation.

Many of the interviewees think that if youngsters are not participating in the labour market/ education and social life it is harder to get them to participate politically.

Most of the interviewees had a positive impression of the FFF network because they saw this as an expression that contradicts the idea of ‘apathetic youth’.

In regards to the concrete problems of young people, most interviewees agreed that affordable housing and long-term job opportunities were among the most important ones.

Interviewees argued that youngsters from specific districts are often stigmatised; this referred to districts with a high concentration of lower-income inhabitants, as well as a high proportion of migrants.

Many of the interviewees claimed that the inequalities in the instances of youth participation reflect inequalities in society at large, and in the political field in particular.

As with the biographic interviews, the pre-coding conducted for the WP report provided significant insights into salient situations, attitudes and views of the Selection of the interviews to analyse for this work. For this work package I also completed a detailed pre-coding scheme (see annex) to aid with the drafting of the report. This scheme included the following criteria: Type of organisation, organisational role (of the interviewee), sector, role of youth for the organisation, experiences working with youth, activities, innovation, needs of youth, cooperation (with other organisations), visibility of youth in public debates, public authorities and youth, discrimination and inequalities, organisational goals. This scheme was filled including descriptive data but also illustrative quotations from the interviews.

All interviews were conducted in the city of study, except for one which was conducted in a nearby city because this was more convenient for the interviewee. Likewise, all interviews took place at the interviewees’ place of preference; sometimes coffee shops, cafeterias and in a few cases at their homes or offices. All interviews were recorded and interviewees were asked to sign a consent form which explained how the data would be handled. Furthermore, the interviews selected for this analysis were transcribed and anonymised. In a few cases, interviewees were reached out again in order to clarify some of specific issues or expand on some of their responses. The interviews selected belong to work packages

3 and 6, both work packages studied the same city; WP6 explores the dynamics of activism from the micro perspective and work package 3 explored the political opportunity structure and the organisational perspective.

3.2 Research Paradigm, Methods and Philosophical Assumptions

3.2.1 Qualitative Analysis

This dissertation, as well as the two work packages it draws its data from, takes a qualitative approach to the question about how actors are experiencing and making sense of the spaces, dynamics and debates around young political engagement in a major German city and explores how actors interpret and understand these experiences. Given this aim at understanding process, experience and even meaning, a qualitative approach is best suited.

Qualitative approaches are often rooted in the conception that agents construct and interpret social reality and that this construction and interpretation are significant because they influence how agents act upon reality (Cropley 2019, Creswell 2011). These studies often attempt to build theory, they gather narratives and seek to reveal meaning (Cropley 2019, 27) and they privilege depth over outreach; sample sizes are smaller and rescind the expectation of being representative of a given population (Cropley 2019, Creswell 2011). Qualitative research often explores aspects and cleavages which are hard to reach with quantitative methods such as expectations, motivations for action, interpretations (of personal experience or specific realities) emotional responses, dominant discourses and thoughts of specific groups. In that sense, “the task of qualitative research is to gain insights into these constructions of reality, i.e., to tease out the nature of the world as it is experienced, structured and interpreted by people in the course of their everyday lives.” (Cropley 2019, 11). For these purposes, qualitative researchers often resort to field methodologies that include in-depth interviews, participant observation, ethnographic analysis, focus group interviews and document analysis, among others. The most widespread qualitative methods; ethnography, interpretative phenomenological analysis, discourse analysis and grounded theory (GTM). Since the 1960s Grounded Theory in its different versions has become the most widespread type of qualitative methods and it is the method selected for this work.

In the specific case of social movement and participation analyses, some researchers have resorted to qualitative analyses in order to gather richer data about meanings, expectations, collective identities and motivations in political participation or innovation and adaptation in social movement strategy (Blee and Taylor 2002, O’Toole 2003, McAdam 1983). Some scholars have used semi-structured interviews to study political engagement in order to create richer data about individual trajectories (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2012b) personal and collective identities, as well as interpretations and definitions of personal experience, political context and political action. Moreover, other scholars have also used semi-structured interviews to explore the effects of political activism on life choices, values and personal

attitudes. These studies have shown how semi-structured interviewing can shed lights on the different factions within organisations as well as the diversity of motivation and micro-mobilisation in political engagement (Blee and Taylor 2002, Bosi 2012, Bosi and Della Porta 2012). In social movement studies the emphasis on biographies and trajectories have helped to gain information about the conditions that precede and foster activism (Corrigan-Brown 2012b) about the personal and biographical effects of activism (McAdam 1986, Passy and Giugni 2000). In these cases, biographical offer interesting possibilities since they allow open questions such as “Can you tell me something about yourself?” In which there is no directly implied answer and it is possible for interviewees to interpret and link specific events and situations.

3.2.2 Grounded Theory

As previously stated, this is a qualitative analysis that uses the steps of Straussian GTM for researchers. GTM is known as a widespread methodology among qualitative researchers, but it is also valued for providing qualitative researchers with very systematic and concrete analytical guidelines (Cropley 2019, Mattoni 2020, 2014). Practitioners and students of Grounded Theory Methods have developed in different directions, but they nonetheless recognise Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser’s *Awareness of Dying* (1965) and ‘*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*’ (1967) as the initiation of this methodology. At this time, Glaser and Strauss proposed a ground-breaking methodological approach to social research which re-lived qualitative methods at a time when quantitative approaches dominated. Moreover, the scholars sought to develop more systematic and thorough procedures for qualitative research.

Glaser and Strauss proposed a method that “discovered theory from data” (Glaser/ Strauss 1967). It was based on a theoretical sampling, systematic coding, conceptualisation, constant comparison. The scholars stressed that theory should emerge from the data, and, in that sense, researchers should be careful not to be influenced by previous knowledge or prejudices about the topic. The scholars saw GTM as an iterative process in which data analysis begins with the start of the data collection, and data collection can continue if, for instance, the analysis suggests that more data are necessary in order to expand or enrich specific categories. Data collection continues until analytical categories are saturated.

Another key tenet was the systematic coding of the data which should be independent from pre-conceptions and previous theories about the subject. Initially the authors foresaw a stage of open coding during which researchers would thoroughly analyse the material assigning codes to specific chunks or passages, and then a process of axial coding. In this methodology, researchers are expected to steadily refine and connect their codes and, eventually, find their code category around which the other categories will be articulated (Glaser/ Strauss 1967). The latter stages of coding would lead to more abstract categories and the “emergence of theory” from the data.

The method initially developed by Glaser and Strauss reflected aspects of their respective trajectories; Glaser had experience working in the fields of social psychology and in the use of statistical methods whereas Strauss came from the Chicago school of sociology and thus, was influenced by the tradition of symbolic interactionism. Glaser's experience with quantitative methods influenced the development of a systematic coding process as an important step in the process of analysis and the influence of positivist philosophy is traceable in the assumption that there is a concrete social reality which researchers can discover. On the other hand, Straussian experience with symbolic interactionism and with the Chicago School, is visible in the interpretative nature of GTM. This is particularly true for the coding process and the constant comparison (Kenny/ Fourie 2015). Both researchers developed this methodology that sought to focus on the data (instead of parting from preconceived hypotheses) have a strong interpretative element, while simultaneously giving providing qualitative analysis with a strong and systematic coding process.

Since then, GTM has all but remained stable: numerous qualitative researchers have opted for this methodology as described by the others, while others have been more vocal about some of its limitations and thus generated different versions of GT (see: Bryant/Charmaz 2007, Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 1998, 2008). Since the publication of these seminal works, GTM has become the most widespread methodology among qualitative researchers. Still, further researchers have continued to develop, reshape and adapt this methodology giving way to lively discussions as to which of these approaches remains closest to the original GTM spirit (Kenny/ Fourie 2015). This chapter does not to aim to thoroughly gather all the details and the modifications that have characterised the debates around GTM, instead it will briefly introduce the main issues of discussion among GTM practitioners and the three main currents involved in these discussions. The best- known approaches to GTM are the classical approach, the Straussian approach and the constructivist approach.

This original version of GTM talked about "discovering theory" which required for practitioners to set aside their prior knowledge, prejudices and opinions about the topic under study. This raised significant criticisms and were among the points of departure for later practitioners of GTM (see: Bryant and Charmaz Strauss/ Corbin 2008) on the one hand, researchers criticised the premise that the theory (and social reality) are to be discovered, which implies that there is an objective and concrete reality and theory to be found and exposed (see: Kenny/ Fourie 2015) Likewise, some of the later practitioners also questioned the idea of setting theory and preconceptions aside (Strauss/ Corbin 2008). Critics argued that it is not realistic to assume that practitioners will be truly detached from theories or that they have neutral positions when they conduct research. The original methodology has been constantly revised by the authors (together and separately) as well as posterior practitioners (Bryant and Charmaz 2007). In spite of the disputes regarding the philosophical assumptions (either leaning more towards positivism or constructivism) the role of theory and the role of the researcher, GTM continue to agree on the

relevance of theoretical sampling, saturation of categories, systematic coding of the data and theory emerging from the data.

This work comes closest to the Straussian version of GTM because of the influence of SI. This approach to GTM attempts to overcome some of the positivistic undertones of the classical GTM. Straussian GTM proposes a highly complex and detailed coding process which has been questioned for sacrificing flexibility for the sake of establishing more rigorous procedures (Kenny/ Fourie 2015). Furthermore, this approach of GTM has also been questioned for continuing to part from the idea that there is a concrete reality, even if it cannot be fully grasped by the researchers. Instead, researchers can only grasp the experiences and the interpretations that actors involved can make of this reality. This is an approach to GTM that has stressed the value of GTM in exploring cultural phenomena but also for generating detailed data about emotions, thinking processes, etc. (Strauss/ Corbin 1998, 2008)

This approach seemed appropriate for several reasons. Firstly, the more nuanced view of the role of theory and previous literature, as well as the recognition of the researcher's position and role. This was particularly significant* considering that the interviews were planned and conducted within a broader research project which, in turn, demands planning and organisation that are unattainable without previous knowledge of the topic at stake. Moreover, considering the abundant literature about political participation and social movements, it seemed more appropriate to adhere to a research approach that more openly considers the fact that researchers rarely enter a new project with no previous knowledge.

The systematic and detailed coding processes outlined by Strauss and Corbin were, as suggested by the researchers themselves, not applied word-to word. Nonetheless, they helped me bring more structure and rigour into the analysis by serving as check instances to make sure I was labelling and connecting codes in a consistent manner (i.e., by always asking the same questions, following consistent coding strategies) and that I could trace back the logic behind these decisions to the data. Considering the vast amounts of rich data collected, the steps outlined by Strauss and Corbin provided important guidance when it came to establishing connections between categories and, ultimately, developing a storyline that could be traced back to the data and the relationships established. Among the concrete examples of how these guidelines proved helpful was asking questions about what exactly binds elements or phenomena together? What exactly makes a category? The use given to these guidelines will be illustrated in further details throughout this chapter.

3.2.3 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi-Structured interviews are based on flexible guidelines which set concrete thematic blocs and themes of interest, but use open questions and allow flexibility to probe, supplement and expand the

guidelines if necessary (Blee and Taylor 2002, Döringer 2021). This is well suited for GTM approaches given the iterative process of data analysis and collection. Therefore, these interviews “can be used as a streamlined means of obtaining the rich, detailed data typically generated through field research without committing the investigator to prolonged involvement in the lives and activities of social movements” (Blee/ Taylor 2002, 93). Semi-structured interviews are said to “put agency at centre of the research” (ibid.) by giving voice to the participants (and not just official statements and documents) of social movements, allowing space to explore motivation, interpretation, collective identity as well as the dynamics and strategies that take place during the “quiet times of social movements” (ibid. 94). In this case the interview guidelines were developed within the context of the EURYKA project.

The first set of interviews were biographic interviews, which are useful in understanding personal motivations but also the ways in which actors interpret and experience the general context and differentiated pathways towards a given outcome (Bosi 2012, Bosi/ Della Porta 2012, Blee/ Taylor 2002).

Bosi and Della Porta (2012) combined biographic interviews with different sources in order to contrast the information that was given by the interviewees, in their words:

Semi-structured interviews and autobiographies are certainly highly selective and even self-serving, providing the opportunity for retrospective self-justification by (ex-) militants. They are also constrained by the meso- and macro-level realities at the time they were produced, so that the account of the past is coloured by the perception of the present (Bosi/ Della Porta 2012, 370).

In the present case, biographic interviews were supplemented with organisational and expert interviews and occasional internet searches which served to contrast points of view, gain more information about the context and about how some actors are seen from the outside. But more important than this, were some of the posterior emails and short exchanges because the verification was more intended towards clarifying what the interviewees meant and not whether or not they are being fully accurate and fair in their accounts. Hence, for the present purposes, the accounts given by interviewees about their own lives are always true, and it is the job of the researcher to analyse in which sense (paraphrasing Blee/ Taylor 2002).

The second set of interviews, which included organisational and expert interviews, come closer to the key informants and expert interviews (Döringer 2021, Blee/ Taylor 2002). These interviewees are key informants because of their specific positions and experiences within a given organisation or social movement; they are able to speak on behalf of the group. These informants are important in gaining information about organisational strategies, dynamics, and structures and also to understand how organisation or groups position themselves towards the outside (Blee and Taylor 2002, 107).

Methods guidelines and methodological debates recognise that expert interviews can serve different purposes and, even more, experts can be of different types (for a comprehensive approach to these debates: Bogner et al 2009, Döringer 2021). Broadly speaking, the literature recognises “technical experts” “process experts” as well as “experts with interpretative knowledge (know why)”. The stakeholder sample in this dissertation comes close to Bogner et al (ibid. 54) definition of expert as actors who can shape or influence a specific field of action in virtue of their position, actions or knowledge. These are actors with an understanding of process and interpretative knowledge of the field of action given by their experience and their own specific position. To that extent, these are not “technical experts” who necessarily have an academically founded understanding of the social field, but are such because of their experience and position. Furthermore, the experts sought for this sample reflected different views and perspectives in order to avoid portraying a single sector (Döringer 2021). These were in the strict sense, no exploratory interviews, given that at the point these were conducted the project and the biographic interviews had provided significant insights into the spaces and dynamics of activism, but they come closer to what is defined as problem centred and theory generating interviews (Döringer 2021, Bogner et al 2009). In both cases, researchers have recognised that these reports are not solely factual information about their field of action or the organisation they represent, but they are also shaped by the informants’ own experiences within this specific field of action and how they make sense thereof (Bogner et al 2009).

Researchers who have worked and dealt with methodological questions intensively, also stress the salience of the interview dynamic in qualitative research: whether the interviewer herself is positioned as an insider or outsider (Blee /Taylor 2002) makes a significant difference for the interviews and the analysis. Likewise, whether the interviewer is positioned or regarded as a naïve observer or rather as a well- informed discussion partner can determine the type of information and the details that the informants feel compelled to share. Lastly, in cases where the researcher is perceived as a potential critic, respondents can have a stronger inclination to justify themselves (Döringer 2021) or to have a defensive attitude. In that sense, it is relevant to mention that my position was, in all cases, one of an outsider. Naturally, in the case of the biographic interviews I mostly stood as a naïve participant since I had no prior knowledge of the informants’ and their personal trajectories. In the case of the other interviews, this was varied.

3.2.4 Epistemological Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions underlying this work are strongly linked to those of Straussian GTM and (more broadly) qualitative approaches in general. In its last revision, Straussian GTM recognises two main schools of thought as its influences: symbolic interactionism and pragmatism. Likewise, this

analysis, as Straussian GTM in its later version, acknowledges the influence of social constructivism. Following the premises of these schools of thought, this methodology parts from the assumption that social actors and actions are embedded in systems of meanings, and that actions are embedded within sequences of interaction. “The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions. Their “response” is not made directly to the actions of one another, but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions” (Strauss/ Corbin 2008, 2 citing Blumer 1969, 19)

These meanings are created and constantly modified through and in interaction; and actors within these dynamics are shaped by their own belonging to differentiated and overlapping social worlds. Hence action is not always rational, and is influenced by some of the meanings attached to different objects and dynamics. In that sense, this approach parts from the assumption that reality is contingent and thus all knowledge is also contingent (Strauss/ Corbin 2008, 9).

Furthermore, this methodological approach parts from the assumption that “all knowledge is constructed” and “concepts and theories are constructed by researchers” (Strauss/ Corbin 2008, 3). While it departs from a positivistic assumption of a reality to be “discovered” by researchers, it does not take the radical constructivist view. This approach assumes that researchers create knowledge based on the ways in which actors have reconstructed their experiences of the world, admitting that there are external phenomena but “However it is not the event itself that is the object of our study, because each person experiences and gives meaning to event in light of his or her own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, cultural, political, religious and professional backgrounds. (Strauss/ Corbin 2008, 10). Following these philosophical assumptions, I would stress that this is one possible interpretation of a broad and rich data set which could eventually be interpreted differently, by emphasising other aspects thereof. Moreover, that this analysis seeks primarily to understand and explain attitudes, motivations, and interpretations of actors more than establish the veracity of their accounts or determine who “is right” in cases of controversial views around a single event.

3.3 Case Selection

The sample presented here was not randomly selected. It is rather biased, in the sense that qualitative work usually is: because it seeks diversity and richness of experience more than representativeness (Morse 2006, 233). This dissertation can be said to have two main stages of case selection: the first one dictated by the guidelines and time frames of the EURYKA project, and the second one which corresponds to the cases that were analysed in depth for this work. The first instance combined instances of purposive sampling (maximising diversity and richness parting from concrete categories) with instances of theoretical sampling (the openness to add categories like the workers’ union and the

decision to conduct more interviews than foreseen by the project in order to achieve more richness and saturation). Furthermore, the selection is, at least to some extent, shaped by convenience: in some cases, more organisations or potential interview partners were contacted but many of these requests went unattended or refused. Hence, the availability and willingness of potential interview partners also shaped the sampling process. Likewise, due to different reasons (for instance some people are more reserved than others and thus tend to speak less when asked the same questions) some interviews were richer in data than others and so, had more to offer for an in-depth analysis.

Besides being influenced by the project sampling, the second stage of selection, namely that of the specific cases to be analysed for this dissertation, was influenced by the initial analyses and the reports that were delivered to the EURYKA consortium. These instances can be regarded as preliminary stages of analysis in which some of the most salient problems, processes and opinions were outlined: this was partly an analytical scheme given that it sought to “fill” specific categories in order to ensure comparability across national samples. These categories presented a pre-coding scheme with concrete topics like “transformations” or “sustained participation” which, at the same time, allowed the researcher some flexibility. Still, during this preliminary analysis further topics and issues emerged. Parting from an initial overview, the selection of the interviews for this analysis sought to embark a broad variety of experiences, views and debates regarding youth and participation.

The second stage of the sample selection combined instances of purposive sampling and theoretical sampling, as at the initial stage, the sampling was thought to capture as much diversity as possible with the biographic interviews selected and following the initial analysis, the sample continued to be adjusted in order to saturate and enrich categories and data. The initial selection of the biographic interviews sought to capture as much variation as possible: thus, seeking activists with different trajectories, organisational affiliations and views of their own activism. Moreover, with the selection I also sought to reflect some variation in personal experiences, socio-economic background, occupations, ethnic background, areas of interest and repertoires of action. Lastly, I tried to maintain a balance between interviewees whose activism concentrates on a single organisation, and others who militate in different groups and had looser organisational bonds.

As a result, I selected the activists I here refer to as Marius, Dilek, Lisa, Seyran, Sarah, Anna, Thomas and Christian because they militate in different organisations and have different forms of engagement: Lisa, Marius and Seyran militate in long-standing organisations (mainstream political parties and the workers union) and their activism is strongly centred in their work with these organisations. Conversely, Thomas, Anna, Dilek, and Sarah are members of lesser-known groups, such as JEF, *Zero Waste* and the groups I henceforth name *Einfach Leben* and Women’s Group (WG). Additionally, two of them had the experience of having started an groups or initiatives themselves (Dilek and Thomas). Likewise, the selection also captures diversity in the personal backgrounds: the interviewees come from different

regions in Germany, from both urban and rural contexts, different socio-economic background, and three of them have migrant backgrounds (Dilek, Seyran and Juan). Lastly, I wanted to include someone who had been an initiator, which was another reason (besides the above listed) for selecting Thomas. The selection of these activist attempts to encompass the diversity of the organisations in which the interviewees engaged: different sizes, different profiles, different levels of structuration, different repertoires of action. The biographic interviews officially started in the Spring of 2018 and ended in early 2019.

Initially these interviews were transcribed. After the initial stages of analysis, I decided to add two more interviews which could bring further variation to the socialisation, trajectories, and type of organisational affiliation; those of Juan and Ludwig. These were particularly interesting because they expanded and even contrasted with some of the other cases: both Ludwig and Juan identify as homosexuals and have been active within LGTBQ demonstrations, but neither one of them exposed a strong sense of grievance for being part of a sexual minority, as was the case with Anna. Even more, Juan has a migrant descent and admits having been mistaken with a refugee (something that Seyran and Murad also mentioned) but his testimony doesn't reflect a strong sense of grievance because of this, something which contrasts with Dilek and Seyran's testimony. Additionally, he has followed an activist trajectory strongly linked to the institutionalised instances.

The selection of the expert and the organisational interviews sought to enrich and expand the information provided by activists about the city's opportunities and instances for young engagement. In this case it was important to reflect the opinions of those with direct and concrete experience with young participation; either because they have been directly involved in promoting such projects, or because they have overseen instances of participation. Moreover, I sought to reflect diversity in experiences (the experts selected have experience in different instances related to youth participation).

Schalnus: career politician. Has experience working in dependencies for youth and education in the city.

Deniz: former member of the Green party's youth wing and now a member of the Green party. He has worked in different participation initiatives in the city. At the time of the interview, he was working for the integration and youth dependency. Selected because of the combination of having "lived experience" as a youth activist, as well as a professional experience working in different instances related to youth participation.

Vural: Responsible for the program *Demokratie Leben* in the city.

Anja She was at the time of the interview the representative of the local youth ring. She had been a young activist engaged in school politics, university politics, among others.

The organisational and expert interviews were started in late 2018 and were finalised towards the end of the 2019 summer. As in the case of expert interviews, organisational interviews were selected to expand and enrich the categories of the biographic data. These were also some of the organisational representatives that supplemented some of the biographic interviews, raised important topics in terms of their self-perception as activists and self-perceptions as strategies. The organisational interviews were only selected from those youth-lead (and not the youth-oriented) organisations. That is, the main focus was set on young activists and how they see their own organisational work, how they conceived their strategies. Additionally, some of these organisational interviews contributed with significant expansions on the ideas and experiences raised during the biographic interviews. The interviews with representatives of the youth-dedicated organisations were not as fruitful given that, in most cases, they raised and expressed issues similar to those of the stakeholders' interviews because the youth-dedicated organisations often had an educational vocation, an orientation towards either "teaching democracy" or promoting certain life-skills.

These also reflected some diversity in the size, the aims, age of the organisation, views, level of structuration and the kind of strategies they prefer: representatives from the JU, SDS (Left party youth), JEF, Student Union, a local organisation here named MLY (Migrant Labour Youth) and *Viva con Agua*. In that sense, the political parties represent large and long-standing organisations, while still presenting some significant differences: the JU has a longer history than the SDS (and the Left party itself) and both partisan groups presented salient differences when it comes to their repertoires of action and views of activism. Furthermore, this was a selection that allowed for a contrast of testimonies between a supporter of a party in power (the CDU) and one of an opposition party (the Left party). *Viva con Agua* is a relatively new organisation that started in Hamburg in 2007 and since then has rapidly expanded to other cities in Germany. Their main activities include collecting funds for the construction of sanitation facilities abroad, as well as disseminating information about sustainability, waste reduction and water protection. Their main repertoires of action include information stands at concerts and music festivals.

YML is a medium sized organisation that was founded by migrants of Turkish descent in the 1990s. At first, the main goal was to provide mutual help and a space of deliberation for migrant workers. The organisation has a young wing which initially targeted young working-class people of migrant descent and provided a space for political deliberation, leisure, and networking. At the time of the interview Murad argued that even though the organisation started as a migrant group, they do not exclusively target migrants. Their repertoires of action include a newspaper written by youngsters (that covers political as well as social and cultural issues), discussion rounds, demonstrating, petitioning, as well as leisure and networking activities. The student union is a classical instance of youth participation, it has primarily representative and mediating functions (between university students and university directives). The student union organises social and information events. At the time of the interviews, they had started organising a series of political discussions for the students. JEF is a European network for young people

of different political backgrounds. In that sense, their main repertoires of action are discussion rounds, political education about Europe. This is a supra-partisan group in which the uniting factor is the importance of the European Union, in particular for young people, and they try to disseminate information about Europe and to promote discussions from a European perspective.

The organisations selected for this analysis reflect the ample and diverse understanding of participation and political deliberation: from the more conventional ideas reflected by the JU (participation mostly connected with partisanship and electoral politics) participation in terms of contentious activities (SDS) but also participation in terms of representing youth interests (student union and YML), political debate as well as access to leisure and connections (YML and *Viva con Agua*). Those interviewed for the organisation interviews were all young adults themselves (18-35) who had been members of their respective organisations for over two years, had some positions of responsibility and were able to speak on behalf of the organisation (either as coordinators or speakers). The only exception to this was Suzanne who, at the time of the interview, was still 17. Still, she explained, she had been with the SDS for over two years and was about to turn 18.

Given that the project interviews were necessarily bound by concrete deadlines for the completion of reports, absolute conceptual saturation was not the only criterion considered when it came to putting an end to the data collection. Saturation was sought as much as possible. As I was conducting the interviews for both work packages, I realised that as much as environmentalism is a salient issue, the AfD has a particular salience when it came to how the interviewees expressed their fear of radicalisation. Therefore, I made attempts to contact their youth organisation at the local, state, and federal level but, unfortunately, this yielded no results. The objective was, in that sense, to expand on the data by presenting an exceptional case.

In the case of the dissertation, the case selection came closer to the principle posed by saturation: interviews were included in the sample (and occasionally expanded with phone calls, emails) inasmuch as they expanded or enriched the data. In that sense, these biographical interviews sufficed. Naturally, a research project completely detached from timely pressures, could certainly expand these boundaries and, for instance, re-contact the activists to see if something has changed significantly in their activism, and attempt (once again) at reaching the right-wing youth organisations. This sample concentrates on organisations and activists within a left-leaning to centre-right spectrum and does not include interviews with representatives of more radicalised or violent groups.

3.4 Data Analysis

The interviews were analysed following the precepts of Straussian Grounded Theory (1990, 1998, 2008). Given that Straussian GTM has changed since the publication of the first guidelines in 1990, it is pertinent to clarify that this dissertation benefitted from both, the initial strict guidelines for the analysis but also from the more nuanced view towards constructivism and the more flexible approach that was characteristic of the latter revision (see: Strauss/ Corbin 2008). In that sense, the analysis is focused not on the specific and concrete events and phenomena described, but more with the ways in which the interviewees have experienced and made sense of these experience and phenomena. More importantly, the analysis is done following guidelines but also recognising two important premises of the later revisions of Straussian GTM, namely that this is one (of potentially several) way of interpreting this dataset and that conceptualisations and theories are constructions of researchers (Strauss/ Corbin 2008, 10).

As it is usual in GTM, the processes of data collection and analysis were not so clearly separated, this was an iterative process that involved constant revision. As previously stated, I was drafting notes, memos, summaries and maps of trajectories after each interview, and the pre-coding schemes were also constantly changed and updated. This was aided by the audio recordings and occasional phone calls and additional exchanges with the activists. Additionally, the drafting of the reports also constitutes a step in the analysis process. The interviews analysed in depth for this dissertation were transcribed and the coding was done with these transcriptions. In order to guarantee the anonymity that was promised to the interviewees, once the analysis stages were concluded, the interview transcripts were anonymised and all names that could lead to the identification of the interviewees were deleted. Additionally, as previously mentioned, I assigned a pseudonym to each of the participant. These were assigned to match their gender. To those with whom I spoke on first-name basis, I assigned forenames and to those with whom I spoke using surnames (these were mostly the experts) I assigned surnames. In regard to the organisations: I kept the original names of all groups that have a nation-wide presence and assigned fake names to local organisations. This sub-chapter will use some concrete examples from the data in order to (partially) illustrate how the guidelines proposed by GTM were used throughout the analysis. The diagrams and tables attempt to re-create some of the drafts made during the process.

3.4.1 Coding, memos, notes

If one were to oversimplify the coding process as presented by practitioners of GTM (Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 1998, 2008) it would be the process of taking the down to pieces in order to later reassemble it based on conceptual connections in order to build theory. (Strauss/ Corbin, 1998, 19). Both the original GTM and Straussian GTM foresee this as a process that required different stages and a systematic analysis to the data. The transcribed interviews were coded following a procedure that comes closest to

that described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in their detailed guide for novice practitioners of Grounded Theory, namely a phase of line-to line open coding, followed by axial coding and selective coding. Despite the present format, these were not exactly lineal and strictly closed stages, but they guided the analysis in order to have a consistent process.

More than closed-stages, the steps outlined by Strauss and Corbin represent different focus taken during the analysis; hence, “open coding” concentrates on “opening the data” through a systematic analysis (often line-to line) that includes labelling passages and sentences according to the topics/ ideas presented. At this point, many of the codes are “in-vivo codes” which means, codes that are directly taken from the data. Axial and selective coding concentrate on the relations between categories, the more abstract levels of analysis and the selection of core categories and a storyline.

The diagram below illustrates the main instances of analysis as conceived by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998). The authors, as later practitioners of this approach to GTM, stress that, in praxis, the analysis does not follow such a lineal development as the picture would suggest and, furthermore, the conditional matrix is not an instance of analysis but rather a step that involves summarising and integrating the previous levels of analysis (Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 163 as cited by Kenny/ Fourie 2015, 1275). This detailed guideline helped outline specific instances



Figure 1 Stages of analysis in Straussian GTM as presented by Kenny and Fourie 2015

In this particular case, the coding stages were not so neatly separated: this was an iterative process during which as I revised the codes, I also drafted notes about how they could potentially relate to one another (or at least which codes could potentially contradict, confirm or complement each other) and this lead sometimes to new codes emerging and others being deleted. Nonetheless, there was a dominant approach at different moments of the analysis: initially, as I did the line-to line coding, the main emphasis was set on letting topics and labels emerge from the data whereas, later, I focused more on establishing connections between such codes.

The coding process was supported by the memos and the summaries that were drafted and revised through the data collection and data analysis. During the interviews I wrote brief summaries of the conversations as well as notes about the impressions the interviewees left me: were they easy to reach, or was it hard to schedule? Were they open to spending more time and eventually for follow-up conversations or did show scepticism? Did the conversation flow easily or did I need to ask more follow

up questions? These notes were not a systematic procedure but rather an intuitive collection of impressions which I later used in order to make sure the analysis wasn't shaped by own personal impression of the person. Besides this, the pre-coding schemes were practical in keeping a uniform summary of the conversations. I used had-written memos as well as memos in the MaxQDa program. These were mostly impressions of the conversation, a reminder of further questions to ask and in some cases I wrote a few words if some particular comments reminded me of those made by other interviewees. The memos, summaries and field notes were helpful in keeping track of new issues to add to the interviews (for example specific questions about environmentalism and about other themes that constantly came up throughout the interviews).

3.4.2 Open Coding

Open coding is described as “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss/ Corbin, 1998, 101). Without disregarding the previously mentioned instances of analysis (notes, memos, trajectory maps, summaries, pre-coding schemes and report drafting for the work packages), this segment refers to the more in-depth coding that parts from the line-by-line coding of the transcriptions. This was done using the MaxQDA software. During this process, I assigned labels or colours to specific passages and sentences. These labels usually referred to the processes, problems or main ideas described in these sentences (Strauss/ Corbin 1998, 102). In some cases, one label was used to describe different passages: for example, the label “language” was assigned to different interview passages, all referring to the process during which potential activists are trying to find a fitting organisation. At this point, many of the labels were *invivo* codes which were taken directly from quotations in the text such as:

Invivo codes	Memos and comments added
“At the beginning, I didn't understand much...”	<p>Lisa is talking about her first meetings with the JUSOS. She didn't understand because of the many abbreviations and the specialised language.</p> <p>Past tense: this situation has changed</p>

<p>“It’s like they only wanted to talk inside their own bubble...”</p>	<p>Dilek and her initial “shock” experience with the campus SDS group.</p>
	<p>Being outside (a recognition of in- and outside)</p>

Figure 2 Open Coding, Memos and Invivo Codes

Naturally, these passages were also assigned with other codes because they refer in fact to different aspects of the activists’ experience. I used the programme’s memo function to add comments, thoughts, ideas to the some of the labels. At this point, the labels expressed no relationship with the literature and were mostly descriptive, as I used to give the statements some context or add details about how I understood these statements at the time. Throughout the open-coding, it became clear that some of the labels were similar (semantically) or were connected with one another. For example:

Extract	Invivo label
<p>und wenn Sie jetzt sagen die reden eine Sprache die man wenig versteht oder legen Themen auf die viele vielleicht gar nicht interessieren, weil die interessiert wie krieg ich meinen Ausbildungsplatz? wie krieg ich meine Wohnung? /I: m-hm ja/ und mich interessiert erstmal nicht ich sag das mal ganz provokativ ob es jetzt ein Unisex-Klo gibt oder nicht (.) nach dem Motto da wird dann in einen solchen Diskussionsrunden drei Stunden über ein Unisex-Klo gesprochen aber nur fünf Minuten über eine Wohnungssituation (.) dann verschiebt sich etwas /I: ja/ (.) und das ist diese Frage äh: was ist Mainstream?</p>	<p>They say they use a language that one can’t understand</p> <hr/> <p>Memo: Mr Schalnus talks about how he sees the obstacles some youngsters find in political debates. This has not only to do with the choice of words (difficult language) but also with the topics discussed (not the relevant ones)</p>
<p>also ist nochmal n Unterschied, wenn man hier im im Stadtteil ist und versucht politische Arbeit zu machen (.) ich hab Migrationshintergrund (.) /I: ja/ also ich sehe anders aus (.) ich hab n anderen: Stil zu reden (.) ich hab n anderen äh: kulturellen äh: Hintergrund (.) ich weiß wie man mit diesen Jugendlichen zu</p>	<p>„I know how to talk to these youngsters”</p> <p>“It’s different doing politics in this neighbourhood”</p>

<p>sprechen hat (.) /I: m-hm/ wie man äh: wie man diese Leute anspricht (.) (Memo 132)</p>	<p>Memo: Murad suggests he speaks differently (who is the other?), which poses an advantage when it comes to reaching out to youngsters in his neighbourhood “otherness as an advantage”</p>
<p>Genau ich glaube das würde Politik generell zugänglicher machen also sei es /I: m-hm/ (.) jetzt'n bisschen weit weg so'ne Bundestagsdebatte ist glaub ich für: wesentlich mehr Menschen ansprechend wenn sie nicht in hochgestochener Sprache /I: m-hm/ (.) funktioniert so wie grade also jetzt grade spricht so'ne Bundestagsdebatte ja auch bei erwachsenen Menschen nur ein: geringen Teil /I: ja genau/ flächendeckend an na? also man muss ja schon gute Deutschkenntnisse haben die sehr: (.) ähm (.) ne? also: da muss man eigentlich schon'n bisschen Universitätssprache können @.@ /I: ja/ um das alles so zu verstehen und (.) ganz so schlimm ist bei kommunalpolitischen Dingen natürlich nicht (.) /</p>	<p>„they would reach more people if they didn't use this elevated language” Memo: Anja connects the “university” language she sees in politics with the lack of diversity of activist groups.</p>

Figure 3 Open Coding. Colour Codes

The colour codes illustrate a way of highlighting similar ideas and situations: the grey highlights show elements that refer to ways of speaking (language forms), the simple underline labels about access and the black highlight present contextual aspects. The colour codes were constantly revised and updated but they did nonetheless help me visualise the intertwining of specific ideas. The extracts and labels presented above, showed some similarities: references to ideas of the language of politics being difficult to understand, the idea that this makes it difficult to reach out to some people. Furthermore, Murad's statement unveils an assumption that his background gives him an advantage when it comes to reaching out to those who are (allegedly) not reached, or whose interest is not triggered. Moreover, his statement suggests that he assumes that there are different ways of sparking that correspond to people in different contexts within the same city. These ideas raised questions such as: who is the assumed subject, who is finding political language difficult to understand? What exactly is making political language difficult? What does Anja mean by “university language”? And what is the counterpart to this? These and other emerging questions were noted in my memos and guided some of the further analysis. Likewise, these were also helpful when it came to establishing connections and contrasts between the arguments and the testimonies. These and the codes presented in table (Figure 3) were connected with the broader label

“language barriers”. Throughout the analysis, these and other extracts were revised and connected with others in order to construct categories.

Articulating this and the further categories raised a question posed by GTM practitioners in regards to what exactly makes something a category? What exactly constitutes a commonality that justifies establishing a category: function, origin, form, actor, other?

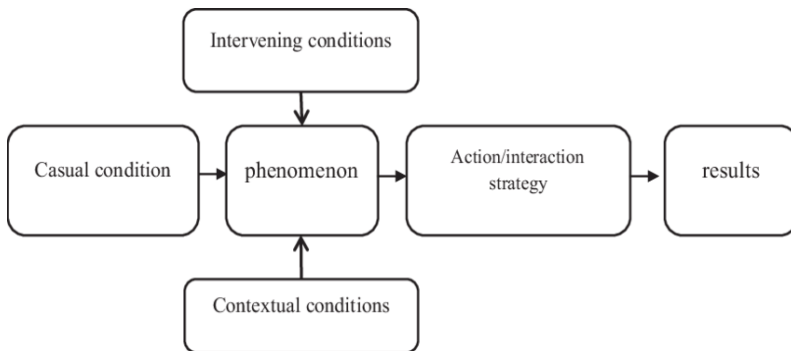
How long, how high, and how far can they fly? With this information, we can begin to explain what properties birds, planes, and kites have in common that enable them to fly and what might happen to that ability, say, if one of those properties were to change, such as a bird developing a broken wing. In the preceding example, the logic is quite easy to follow. However, when working with actual data, the relationships between events and happenings are not always so evident. Because linkages among categories can be very subtle and implicit, it helps to have a scheme that can be used to sort out and organize the emerging connections. (Strauss/ Corbin 1998, 145)

This was a question that accompanied the coding process all along, in particular when it came to grouping passages and statements under a common category: what is it that is grouping these passages together? Is it the type of speaker? Or the process? Or the problem they are depicting? Considering the above listed passages, the label assigned to them (language barriers) did not depict them as a process description: there are no discernible stages (Strauss/ Corbin 1998, 140) but rather the binding element was the implication that people involved in active politics, as well as many of those in established activist circles, communicate in terms that are difficult to understand and often discuss topics and ideas that are not what young people might consider mainstream. The statements all relate to the ability (or lack thereof) to enter and participate in political discussions.

These coded segments (or rather the derived categories) became later on an important part of my second chapter. These particular segments did not solely expose aspects related to language barriers, but also suggested distances in terms of urban districts and access to politics. The process of open coding unveiled further codes which developed as part of this chapter. The category of language, which became “language barriers” was further explored and the following sub-categories were labelled: correct and official language, which links the competence in an official language but also the knowledge of what they call specialised terms; internal jargon, which referred to organisation or sector specific terms.

3.4.3 Axial Coding

Axial coding is conceived as asking questions (to the data) about the relationships between codes. Axial coding sets out to “begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena.” (Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 127). As guidelines for researchers Strauss/



Corbin identify five elements in this stage of analysis: causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/ interaction strategies and consequences. The diagram below illustrates the authors’ explanation of the paradigm model.

The authors, as other GTM practitioners, recommend researchers to avoid imposing this paradigm onto

Figure 4 The paradigm Model (Source: Strauss/ Corbin, 1990, 130)

the data and take these points more as a guideline that should provide some conceptual clarity in the process of data analysis. As GTM manuals recognise (Strauss/ Corbin 1990) the relationships and status that categories show might vary throughout the data and thus, defining these connections might prove trickier than expected. These instances are expected to pose concrete questions in order to connect categories and sub-categories, to identify the former and the latter, and to broaden and enrich the categories by placing them within a broader explanatory context. At this point the scholars stress the role of the paradigm in connecting structure and process (Strauss/ Corbin 1990, 128) and in helping researchers understand the background, the reasons, strategies and reactions related to a specific phenomenon.

One of the most helpful directions was asking about the conditions behind the specific phenomenon (and about the phenomenon itself) and having a more concrete idea about the kind of questions that would be helpful to ask from the data. More importantly, this model was important in ensuring the process of connecting the data and “asking questions” to it was systematic and balanced. As the analysis progressed, it became increasingly clear that these conditions were not perfectly clear-cut. Depending on the specific statement (and interviewee), specific conditions arose more strongly as causal or as contextual conditions. Following some of the steps proposed by GTM’s analytical model, I resorted to diagrams like the one below to ask questions from the data and so, establish relations with other segments of information.

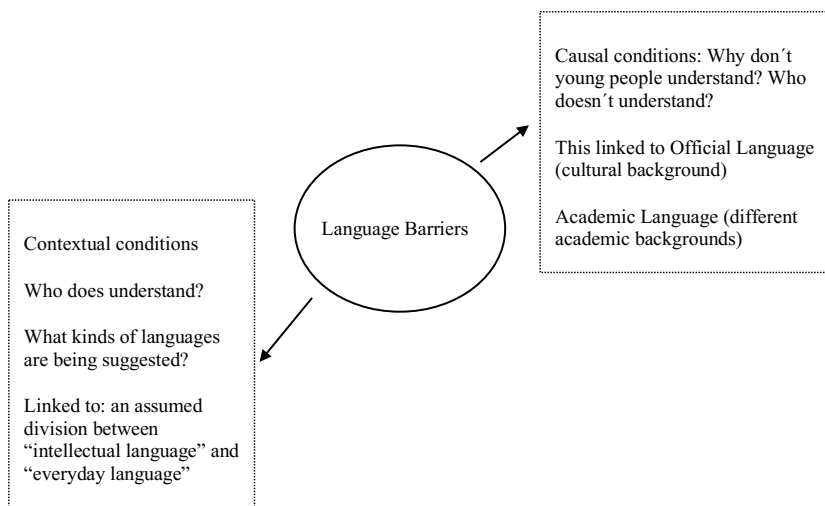


Figure 5 Language Barriers: contextual and causal conditions

These conditions were constructed asking questions from the data and from the codes themselves. Given the reiteration that political activism frequently uses a complicated language which is unintelligible (for some) raised the questions: Who is using this complicated language? Who isn't understanding it? What makes this language complicated? Why do the interviews suggest that some people can understand this complicated language while others can't? These (and other questions) lead to a renewed exchange with the data which showed that causal conditions behind these so-called language barriers were of different type.

Some of the language barriers were attributed to the national origin (being a migrant in Germany, and thus, not fluent enough in German). Whereas more often interviewees claimed that the reason why some youngsters don't understand political discussion is that the language used within activist circles (and in politics as well) is too academic and complicated (if compared with everyday language). Lastly, other interviewees alluded to a language barrier that is determined by accepting and using organisational jargon as well as socially- and politically correct language. In that sense, asking questions such as *why are people not understanding? Or who is not understanding?* expanded this category because it unveiled different expressions of the phenomenon “language barriers”. Following this, I recoded these segments as “language I, II and III”. At this point, the coding has a higher level of abstraction which allows for more robust and embarking categories. The different forms of these so-called language barriers opened insights into the perceived context: namely, that there are different forms of societal inequalities which are assumed to influence people's standing and perception, that there are some youngsters who are

outside. Besides unveiling some of these contextual aspects, asking questions also exposed something about the interviewees' self-perceived position within these societal inequalities.

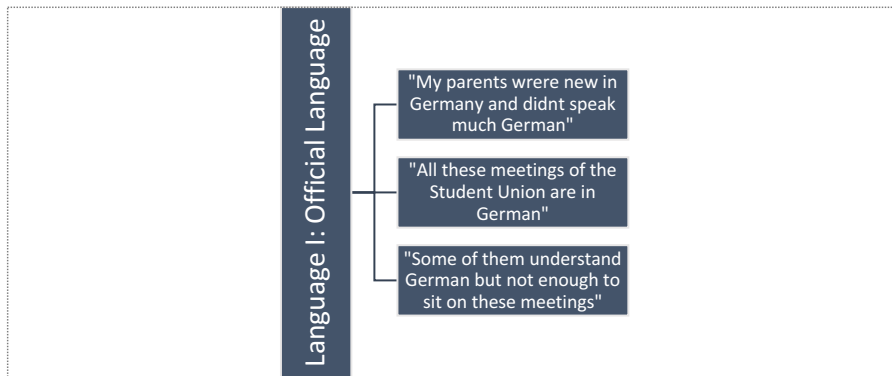


Figure 6 Language I: Official Language

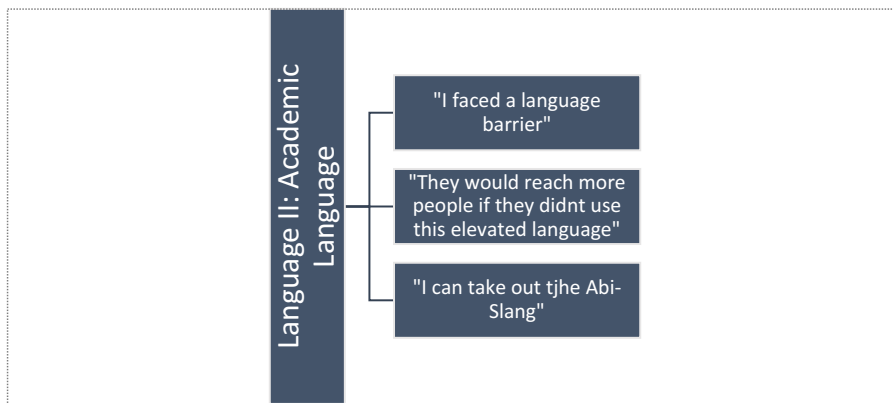


Figure 7 Language II: Academic Language

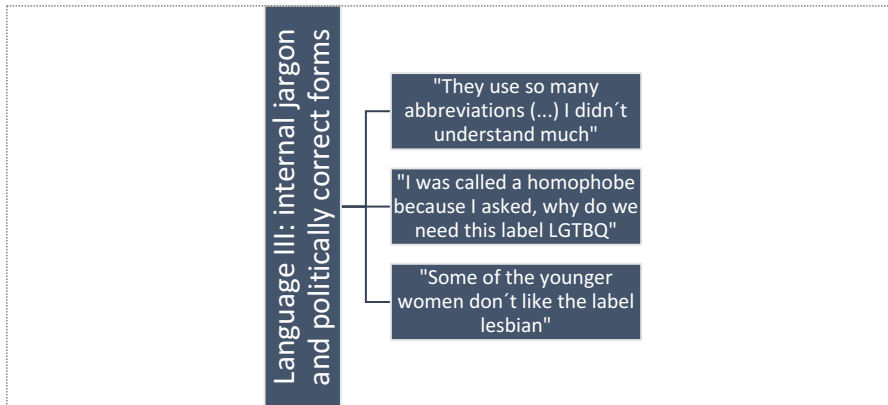


Figure 8 Internal Jargon and Politically Correct Language

These diagrams present, in a simplified and summarised manner, some of the data associated to each of the different forms of language barriers. These differences were given predominantly by the causal and contextual categories. The first diagram presents some of the accounts related to the first form of language barrier, namely, not being fluent in the official language. These testimonies make reference to the questions about the parents' political involvement (Seyran) and how their lack of proficiency accounted (among other reasons) for them not being particular informed about politics in Germany. They also refer to the foreign students at the university and the hurdles for them to join university politics and discussion groups. The last diagram presents the third form of language barriers, which has to do with the accepted and standardised jargons accepted within a group. There is on the one hand, the example of not understanding internal abbreviations, but also the discussion about the use of gender sensitive and politically correct language. These segments albeit differently, express an experience of otherness and difference because of the use of specific jargons and ways of speaking.

The questions raised in this stage of analysis lead to establishing stronger connections with the context to the interviews and to have a clearer view of how the interviewees saw their own positions within a specific context and to have a more concrete idea about the kind of contextual information that was relevant to the interviews. In several cases, the contextual categories were expanded with internet searches and short follow-up conversations with some of the interviewees. The phenomena identified were also connected with concrete actions. This helped expand the connections within the data:

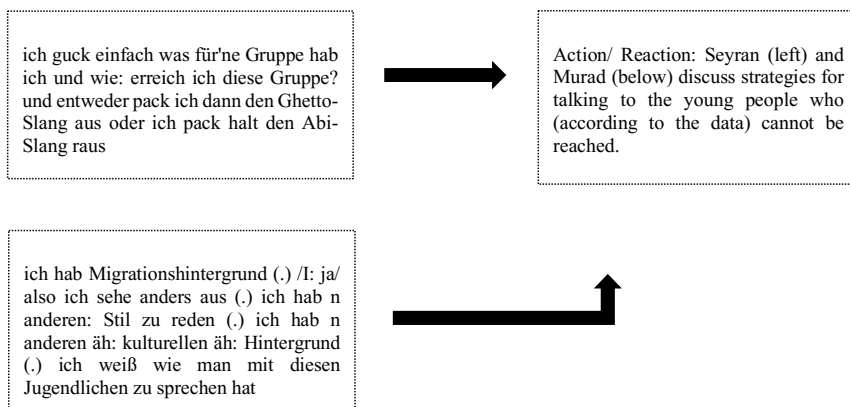


Figure 9 Expanding Relationships and connections in the data

This analytical step (as well as diagrams like the one above) clarified the concrete relationship between segments and categories and were helpful in establishing an initial narrative of some segments of the data. In this particular case, the analysis shows not only what the interviewees see as viable strategies in response to the problem of not understanding, but also how they see themselves within activism and society: both of them regard their social and cultural background as an asset when it comes to overcoming the problem of reaching out to different circles. These responses also confirm many of the same assumptions in other testimonies: that some groups of young people don't understand and thus can't join activist discussions and that these discussions are often held in language which interviewees consider "academic". Moreover, these segments can also provide a view into contextual conditions such as: these two interviewees assume that there are significant social cultural and academic differences among young people and these imply that there are different ways of communicating with (and among) youngsters. Nonetheless, these two segments also suggest that the interviewees view their strategies as the exception rather than the norm and they see these as an important contribution they make.

Making categories richer and more complex also unveiled intersections between different categories: either at the level of consequences, causes or interaction. An example of these intersection is the connection that became clear between "language barriers" and "boring and distant politics"

Initially, language barriers and themes, and the boring distant politics were separated categories. They were linked in the interviews by a specific consequence that interviewees attached to them, namely, that these are both factors that dissuade youngsters from becoming politically active, or at least informed about politics. Moreover, further analysis also revealed a connection at the contextual level. The fact that interviewees claimed that many times activist groups and political actors use a language that is not intelligible for everyone and often concentrate on topics that are not interesting for everyone, both suggest that;

- There are some groups, who are already “inside” these activist circles or who are in institutional settings, who can actively shape the speech (both in terms of the language and the content) and thus, this is not shaped for everyone and this means that activist discourse is not articulated in a way that is accessible for everyone. (Consequence that it tends to dissuade many youngsters from participating.)
- Most interviewees had an idea of whether they were among those defining topics and language use or they were outside.
- Interviewees assume that there are some conditions of inequality and that these have an influence of people’s ability to participate politically.
- When they talked about a homogeneity within activist circles most interviewees referred to the over-representation of middle-class, university educated milieus.
- Being a migrant (self-recognition as migrant background like Seyran and Murad) is also considered a factor that influences the chances of entering activist circles and instances of deliberation. Seyran, Dilek, Murad see themselves as the exception rather than the norm.

These (and other) conceptual intersections facilitated the articulation of categories and the development of initial arguments and establishing theoretical connections. Furthermore, they helped pose further questions to the data.

3.4.4 Selective Coding

As a further analytical instance, Corbin and Strauss proposed selective coding, a process of “integrating the categories with a higher level of abstraction to fashion a GT” (Strauss/ Corbin 1990). In the case of this present analysis, open- axial and selective coding were not clearly separated from one another but were intertwined and interdependent: as categories became richer in conditions and complexity, connections between categories were also unveiled which often led to fusing two categories or creating new ones. Moreover, the integration of these categories with higher levels of abstraction was often linked to an interaction with the literature, but also with the revision and interconnection of categories.

In this context, selective coding refers to “connecting the categories with a more abstract level”. It is a stage at which categories become denser and richer which also helps unveil important relationships between categories (Strauss/ Corbin 2008). A cornerstone to this step is selecting a core category around which other categories are articulated and the arguments for a narrative are developed. Thus, selective coding is associated with connecting categories with broader and more abstract concepts in order to develop a storyline around this.

Even if this instance of analysis was not neatly separated from the others, I will exemplify some of the analytical trajectories involved in the process of integrating categories and making more abstract connections. Continuing with the example of the second chapter, categories such as language (I, II, III), boring and distanced politics, were linked via their contextual, consequential and causal conditions. Other categories like *the north is nice and social, the south is ugly and antisocial*, were further

conceptualised into the categories “inequality” and this latter was expanded and enriched to include the different forms of inequality that are alluded to by the interviewees.

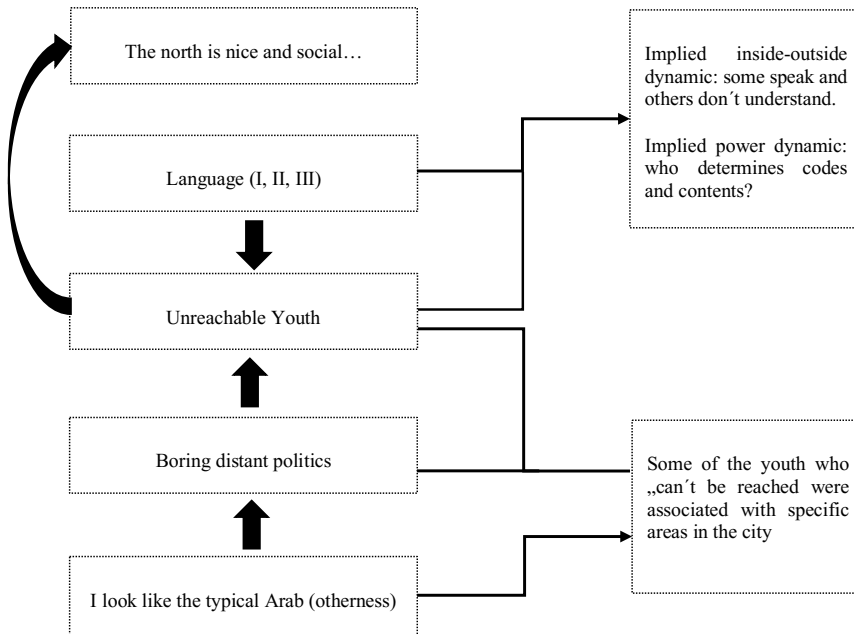


Figure 10 Expressions of Inequality

The above diagram is a simplified reproduction of one of my hand-made analytical diagrams for chapter II. The blue arrow represents the connection between what interviewees considered “unreachable youth” and the spatial conception of the city. The code “the north is nice and social...” was initially and in-vivo code drawn from one of Seyran’s statements. In the analytical process, it became clear that this was a significant category that expressed a sense of perceived inequalities in the city. Therefore, as I linked this to other in-vivo codes such as “the colleagues from the political parties don’t come here” (Murad) and “I guess this whole thing is not really developed in some districts” (Sarah about environmentalism and conscious consumerism). These were grouped under the category “urban inequalities”. The blue arrow that connects this category with the theme of the “unreachable youth” represents the assumption, by several interviewees, that these youngsters who (for one reason or another) were not reached by activist discussions and initiatives, often had not only specific academic and social dimensions, but were also placed within a specific spatial dimension in the city. This, in turns, linked the difficulty to reach youngsters with inequalities and access.

The closer analysis of the testimonies suggested that the idea of access (having access to political activism) implies an understanding of inside-outside and an implied understanding of a power dynamic which is present in some of the testimonies: the power to decide the codes, the acceptable ways of speaking and even the topics. This outside-inside or rather this difference is often connected with economic, academic, and other differences. The diagram below presents how some of these expressions of otherness and being outside are linked with the broader (and more abstract) label “inequalities”.

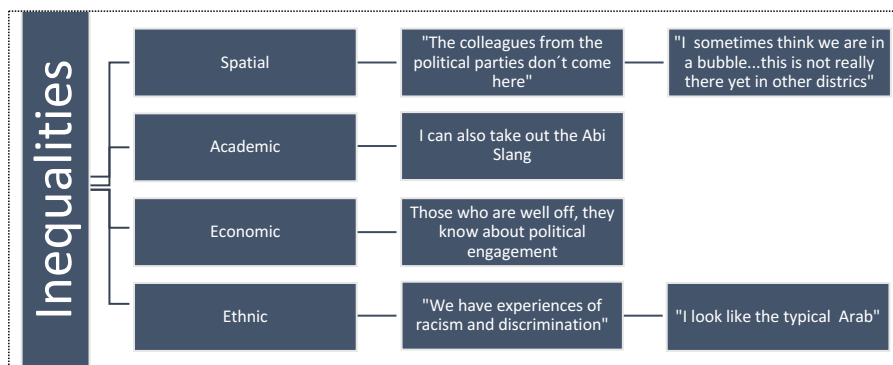


Figure 11 Inequalities II

One of the most salient contextual categories, that also created connections between different thematic categories, was “inequalities”. Different forms of inequalities, in particular academic, financial, and urban inequalities but also ethnic and gender inequalities were often salient either as causal categories or, more often, as contextual aspects cited by the interviewees. This category was often linked to the having (or not) access to instances of political deliberation and participation (causal and contextual aspects of not being able to reach youngsters, or of them not finding or not being interested in politics) but inequalities were also linked to contextual and contributing aspects that described not only the instances and spaces of participation but also how many of the informants perceived society at large and the access of youngsters to different instances of social life.

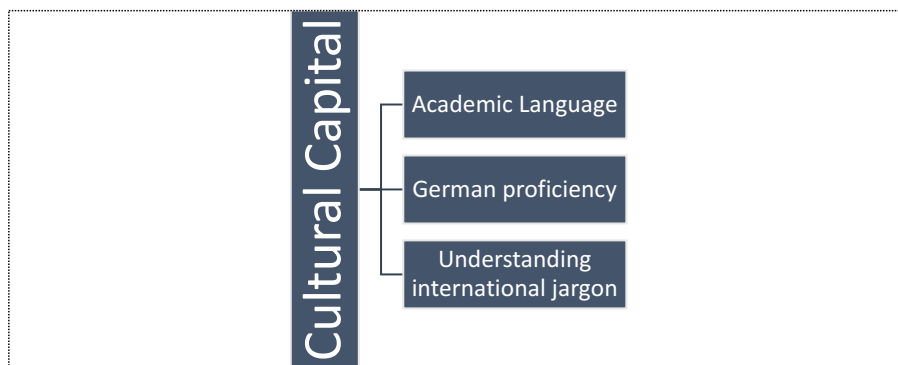


Figure 12 Cultural Capital

In connection with the literature, I introduced a more abstract category to express the connection between inequality, otherness and access, but also to express the different dimensions of the inequalities and forms of otherness described, which often had a material and a symbolic side. That was Bourdieu's concept of capital. Following this, the hurdles related to academic language, German proficiency and the use of context-accurate jargon, were conceptualised as different forms of "cultural capital". Similarly, the forms of otherness (that are also linked to inequalities) such as ethnic discrimination and the stigmatisation of certain districts, were conceptualised under the label symbolic capita

The examples exposed hitherto are predominantly connected to the second chapter of this dissertation, although as the narrative will reveal, the categories are intertwined and, thus, not confined to a single chapter or sub-chapter. These examples present some of the steps taken to process and systematically analyse the data. The questions and steps suggested by Straussian GTM served as guidelines and the connections were often (as here presented) first drafted in the form of graphics and conceptual maps. The other chapters and the dissertation in general were analysed following similar steps as the ones outlined so far. Theoretical sensitising and a constant analysis were helpful in making the categories more abstract and establishing comparability with the literature in general and also within the categories. Lastly, the transit from in-vivo codes all the way through the paradigm model and the selective coding was useful in making categories robust but also in establishing links between the data which ultimately helped develop a storyline.

3.4.5 The storyline

One of the most significant contributions to this research project has been GTM's conceptualisation of a core category around which the other categories, and ultimately, the narrative of the project is articulated. Beyond demanding a single word that summarised the entire project, this idea of the

storyline and the core category were used as a check instance to pose the question: what is this work really about, and how can one trace that back to the data? Moreover, this was a check instance to make sure that the Finding the core category was actually a process that expanded throughout the analysis; each one of the empirical chapters reflects a category that is in itself robust and complex enough that it embarks much of the data and thus “deserves” a chapter on its own.

Finding the core category involved the thorough analysis of the existing categories, as well as the connection with more abstract categories and with the corresponding theory and existing literature. As explained previously, many of the sub-categories and the broader categories themselves had significant conceptual intersections. This was, on the one hand, helpful in finding binding elements and “confirming” that the rationale behind the analysis and selection was plausible, but, on the other hand, posed significant challenges when it came to actually developing the storyline. The challenge was giving these complex, rich and highly interconnected data a lineal and successive narrative. This work has no one-single category but a set of conceptually linked categories, such as activist habitus and local field of activism. These categories have been (and to this day continue to be) revised in order to make sure they are consistently linked with the smaller codes. But more importantly, to make sure that these are traceable back to the data.

3.4.6 The conditional Matrix

In Straussian GTM this constitutes the stage of analysis in which the researcher considers and studies concrete phenomena within different levels of context: interaction, group and individuals, sub-organisational, organisational and institutional, community, national and international. The conditional matrix (also called the conditional/ consequential matrix in a later edition) was not applied directly to this data, nor did I attempt to “fill” all the levels considered in this matrix. Much more it served as a guideline to ask questions about the specific level at which the actions and discourses described by interviewees were located (or, more precisely, where the interviewees were locating these). Moreover, it also raised questions such as which level is being prioritised at which point, and how are the levels of action and discourses interconnect.

This broadened and expanded the contextual analysis significantly and it was useful in elaborating the concept of a local field of young activism as a symbolic space with its own dynamics and discourses but which is inevitably linked to broader societal dynamics and discourses.

In general, this step of analysis helped maintain awareness of the different levels of discourses that were visible throughout the interviews and how these shape the thoughts and the mind-set of activists. Likewise, it helped consider the connections between these levels of political discussion and how, for

example, the discussions at the global and national level influence the ways in which activists make sense of some of the local and regional events, and also the other way around. Because of the nature of the interview guidelines which included numerous questions that made specific reference to the local (city) level, much of the discussions articulated around this level. Still, it is important to stress that for many of the of the problematics were discussed from an intra-city perspective: interviewees localised and discussed the contrasts between different districts within the city.

Given the nature of the study, most of the categories showed a stronger national and even local emphasis. This was particularly the case when interviewees discussed issues such as different forms of inequalities. When they expressed concerned about specific issues such as growing inequality or radicalisation, interviewees often stressed that “it’s not as bad here as in other places” showing how on the political events and the social movements at the global and European level are influencing their frames of thought when it comes to having these concerns and also to the way they assess the potential risk. Interviewees often read these global risks and issues at a very localised scale in that they identified specific localities and districts as being more affected by specific problems.

A significant theme when it comes to the discussion of inequalities was that of the academic inequality and what the interviewees consider not only a highly differentiated validation of scholar paths, but also a differentiated access thereto. This discussion was predominantly centred around a German-specific context, which is the three-tiered school system. This was strongly connected with the question about access to activist circles and activist discussions; the issues related to this, such as language barriers had a dominant German dimension. However, these discussions did reflect an influence of international activist discourses such as politically correct or gender inclusive language.

Many of the dynamics discussed in the first chapter had a strong personal and local emphasis: activists described how they experienced their trajectories towards activism, how they lived and accommodated within localised activist groups (one of them even gives a detailed description of how the groups and their orientation were different depending on the city). Moreover, thy mentioned how the city itself (local) had specific orientations and dominant instances and groups: the fact that the city is considered to be liberal, diverse and open also plays a role in how they describe and make sense of their own experiences in activism.

3.5 Validation

Following Corbin’s later re-edition (2008) of the guidelines she initially published with Anselm Strauss in 1990, the validation sough for this project was to present an interpretation of the data which is consistently and systematically developed and which can remain as close to the data as possible. Even if the theoretical concepts are either constructed or borrowed from the existing literature (and thus not really mentioned by any of the participants) the logical argument that led to these conceptualisations

should be traceable. These theoretical constructs are what allows the present analysis to enter the existing debates around young participation and what enable comparability and discussion.

Considering the interactionist influence of this work, the validation was not seeking to determine the truthfulness of testimonies nor the extent to which they are representative, but that these views were fairly presented. The instances of validation included feedback conversations, *WhatsApp* messaging and email exchanges with some of the interviewees in order to clarify specific passages and make sure that the analysis was not going in a direction different to that they intended. Besides these informal exchanges with some of the interviewees, the validation instances included checking my interpretations (and posterior translations) of specific passages with two native speakers. Additionally, preliminary versions of the analysis were and discussed with my supervisor and much of the feedback opened new questions about specific analytical steps but also about the broader conception behind the dissertation.

An early version of the analysis of trajectories and activist habitus was centred on the concept of permanence; understanding why it is that some activists remain committed to their organisations. This included passages that connected personal, ideological or social transitions as well as the passages containing events that the interviewees considered relevant in their process of becoming activists. An early version of this analysis was presented at the Spanish Sociology Congress (Congreso Español de Sociología) in Valencia in June 2019. The presentation explored the concept of permanence and entanglement considering personal, emotional, social reasons why activists remain engaged in spite of the demands posed by their everyday lives and the obstacles they might face in their activism. Much of the feedback suggested taking a stronger look at identities and trajectories. This, as well as the continuous work with the data and the literature, lead to a new revision of this segment of the analysis.

Similarly, an early version of the analysis of language barriers was presented at the ISA Language and Culture) Conference in Warsaw in September 2019. At that point, the connection between these language barriers and social/ personal backgrounds was only implicitly stated. Lastly, an early analysis of the environmental narratives aspect was presented at the EU COST conference in Budapest in September 2019. In both cases, much of the feedback lead to re-considering the categories carefully as well as their role within the analysis. Besides discussing the early drafts of the analysis, these conferences were also helpful in that they offered the opportunity to discuss some fragments of the interviews (and my interpretations thereof) and some of the theoretical choices.

3.6 Reflectivity

Throughout the field work I jotted down the attitude of the interviewees towards me, the project and the interviews in general. Considering my own position within the interviews was very important given that

many of the interviews were biographic interviews in which the participants were expected to trust me with much of their personal history.

In that sense, I considered that in order to build rapport, I should be willing to answer their questions about the project, about the topic and about my own expectations from the project. Some of the interviewees wanted to know something about what other participants had told me. In these cases, I usually left this for the end of the interviews (in order to avoid taking influence on their views) but I avoided mentioning the names of any of the other participants nor did I cite anyone directly.

Lastly, it makes sense to reflect upon the type of interaction that takes place during an interview and recognise that, as the literature (and the experience) demonstrates, these can be varied (see: Döringer 2021) in particular when it comes to expert interviews.

The interviewer can be seen, for instance, as a co-expert when the expert assumes that the interviewer is familiar with the field and its practical conditions. In contrast, other types are characterized by a more asymmetrical interaction, for instance, when the interviewer is considered a layperson who is naïve about the field of research. On the one hand, this can lead to a broad access of information, as the interviewee is encouraged to explicate the answer. On the other hand, the expert might address issues and provide explanations that are already well known. Furthermore, the researcher might be identified as a potential critic, for instance, because of his or her institutional, organizational, or scientific background. The interviewee may feel criticized by the questions of the interviewer and may doubt her objectivity, which can lead to a limited willingness to answer questions (Bogner/ Menz, 2009; Van Audenhove / Donders, 2019). (Döringer 2021, 270)

Naturally, no interviewer can know for sure how the respondents perceived her (unless she asked) but some of the interviewees let out hints.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Prior to establishing contact with any of the potential interviewees a request for approval was sent to the university's ethics committee. This request for approval included: a copy of the questionnaires and a detailed description of the data management and storage. Two requests for approval were submitted; one requesting approval for the biographic interviews and a second one requesting approval for the organisational and expert interviews.

Once the ethics committee approved the interviews and the data management and storage, potential interviewees were contacted via email or telephone. During this first contact, potential interviewees received the information about the EURYKA project in general and the corresponding working package

for which they were being asked for an interview. At the time of the interview, interviewees were asked to read and sign a consent statement in which the data management and data storage procedures. Interviewees were given the right to cancel or suspend the interview at any time, as well as the chance to make posterior changes to their statements, in case they felt uneasy about any of their comments.

The interviews and analysis were conducted by a single researcher who was also responsible for storing the original recordings. Some of the interviews were transcribed for the analysis anonymised. Moreover, the name of the city has also been anonymised in order to prevent any potential identification of the interviewees, especially of those who held positions of leadership or acted as speakers or representatives of their organisations.

4 Theoretical Background and State of the Art

This dissertation is rooted in interactionist assumptions since it studies how people involved in young activism make sense of the spaces of activism, their interactions with the communities of action and how they interpret their experiences. (Blumer 1980, Snow 2001). As explained in the methodology, this dissertation analyses the way actors see themselves within the organisations and the spaces of activism.

Specifically, this work draws from the field- habitus theoretical toolbox to present an analytical account of the spaces and dynamics of young activism, as remembered by the interviewees. By doing so, I use Bourdieu's detailed conceptualisation of capital (in particular symbolic capital) but I expand to later conceptualisations of field and habitus, that are more akin to interactionist perspectives and have been more closely linked to the analysis of social movements: Crossley's activist habitus (2003, 2004) and Fligstein and McAdam's Strategic Action Fields (2011). Within the participation literature, this work is parting from broader notions of political participation which go beyond the realm of electoral and partisan politics to include NSM, grass-roots exchange, critical consumerism, identity politics among others (Della Porta/ Diani 2006, Spanring et al 2008, Pickard 2019, Norris 2002). More specifically, this work concentrates on sustained and organised young activism. The degrees to which all activism here is organised can be questioned, since many of the interviewees also engage in individual actions or in different organisations or networks, but they have all engaged within organised groups.

For that purpose, this chapter will briefly present some of the precepts of Symbolic Interactionism, in particular as they relate to social movements research. Following this, Bourdieusian theories of capital, habitus and field will be introduced as well as the expansions to this; the habitus and field concepts that are relevant to this work (Fligstein/ McAdam 2011, Crossley 2003, 2004, 2005). Lastly, the literature about youth participation will be summarised in order to locate this work within the general body of research.

4.1 Symbolic Interactionism

If one is to take an (oversimplified) general approach to SI, it can be described as a micro-sociological perspective rooted in the assumption that society (and groups) are sustained by interactions and by the use and interpretation of symbols (Carter/ Fuller 2016, Snow 2001). This is a rich sociological perspective with lengths and caveats that exceed the scope of the present study (Snow 2001, Carter/ Fuller 2016, Turner/ Killian 1987). Studies rooted in this perspective have often dealt with labelling, deviance (Becker 1968) trajectories (Neuveu/ Fillieule 2019, Corrigan-Brown 2020), social roles (1978), frames of interpretation (Goffman 1974, Snow 2013), collective identities (Emirbayer/ Goodwin 1996), etc.

Symbolic Interactionism is most often associated with G.H. Mead's *Mind Self and Society* and Blumer's famous three tenets. Mead defines the Mind as the ability to use and understand symbols and the society as the space of interactions using these symbols. Mead's definition of the "Self" as social and in constant interaction with society is said to have "challenged the idea of the self as bounded and in mutable" (Robinson 2007, 93) and assumes that this "selfing" is made of the generalised other (me) and the I, which is the response to the me. this is one of the core tenets of SI (ibid.) Blumer's triade contends that

(1) that people act toward things, including each other, on the basis of the meanings they have for them; (2) that these meanings are derived through social interaction with others; and (3) that these meanings are managed and transformed through an interpretive process that people use to make sense of and handle the objects that constitute their social worlds (Blumer 1969:2 as cited by Snow 2001, 367)

Snow expands on Blumer's well-known premises stressing another important tenet of SI which is human agency, and the principles of symbolisation and emergence. By focusing on human agency, Snow is stressing that SI acknowledges the influence of structures and context but avoids structural determinism by recognising the role of individual agency. Symbolisation and emergence refer to the process through which things, events and groups take meanings and emergence is described as the "inhabited spaces of society" where expansion and innovation can occur (Snow 2001).

In the concrete case of participation studies, SI is part of the perspective that has taken a constructivist approach (instead of a structuralist one) and has focused on collective identities, symbols, emotions, social roles, framing shared meanings (Emirbayer/ Goodwin 1996, Snow 2013), as opposed to the perspective that has privileged the study of Political Opportunity Structures, Resource Mobilisation (RMT) and networks. Additionally, SI perspective has informed studies about pathways to socialisation and mobilisation (Bosi 2012 Bosi/Della Porta 2013), processes of peer-to-peer socialisation in activist careers (Fillieule 2010, Fillieule/ Neveu 2019, Crossley 2003, 2004), processes of making sense of activism and harmonising it with everyday life (Passy/ Giugni 2000, Crossley 2003). This work is clearly on the side of the cultural approach to the study of sustained political action. Still, Bourdieusian concepts of capital and habitus allows for an analysis that, despite being centred in identities, doesn't fully neglect the role of resources and even connects certain resources to types of identities (Crossley 2003).

4.2 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice attempts to find a "third way" between structuralism and phenomenology, between objectivism and subjectivism (Schwingel 1995, Girling 2004, Fligstein/McAdam 2012). Subjectivism and objectivism have been dominant –and opposing– perspectives in the social sciences; subjectivism privileges the focus on agency, practice, experience, imaginaries as lives by the agents. Conversely, objectivism has privileged studying society setting an emphasis on large-scale institutions, regulations, structures that operate independently from individual agents. Subjectivism has emphasised

the ways in which agents “make sense” of social reality and in their processes of collective meaning-making, whereas objectivism has sought to approach social phenomena as objective realities which exist independently from the actors and their perspective.

In that sense, Bourdieu’s well-known theoretical toolbox with its concepts of field habitus and social space are the author’s attempts at bridging this micro-macro divide and offering an approach to social reality that can consider both perspective in the understanding of society; structure and agency, avoiding extreme determinism as well as context-detached subjectivism. Furthermore, the concepts of habitus, field and social space offer a perspective in which the study of agency is strongly intertwined with an understanding of the structure and the other way around because the social spaces and the dispositions shape the habitus, but the habitus reproduces the social space and the field. Bourdieu’s work approaches the mechanisms through which social positions, capital distributions and structures of domination are reproduced through mostly naturalised and internalised practices, preferences and even frames of cognition and judgement (Bourdieu 1994, Swartz 1997, Girling 2004)

In Bourdieu’s theoretical construct society is represented as a social space populated by numerous fields and subfields; the more differentiated and complex societies would inevitably have more diverse and autonomous fields of action. The positions that (collective and individual) agents occupy within the social space is determined by their possession of cultural and economic capital. The social space is in this conception marked by inequalities and relationships of dominance and subordination; some agents occupy dominant positions with respect to others, and some fields occupy dominant positions within the overall social space. Based on his studies of French society (1994) Bourdieu created this graph in order to illustrate the distribution of positions throughout the social space, and to show the kinds of professions and profiles that would tend to populate the different instances of the social space:

4.3 Bourdieu's Fields

Bourdieu understands fields as semi- autonomous symbolic spaces in which (individual and collective) actors struggle for the goods at stake; these might be power (in the field of politics) prestige and artistic recognition (in the literary field). As the diagram above illustrates, the social space is divided by the opposition of cultural and economic capital, and thus, the stand of agents within that social space is determined by their capital volume.

The fields as semi- autonomous symbolic spaces develop internal hierarchies, struggles and codes, each field has a structure of its own, a logic of its own and its own goods at stake. Actors in a field share a doxa, that is in Bourdieu's terms, a set of beliefs, values and 'self-evident' understandings that are learned, internalised, and eventually perceived as natural by the agents in a field. The doxa does not stand for consensus in the sense that there is an absence of challenge or resistance, but rather a tacit recognition of the field's boundaries, of the field's actors, and the range of possibilities that are thinkable and feasible within each given field.

Depending on the degree of differentiation (of the society) and the level of autonomy and development of each field, it will become increasingly self-referential (Bourdieu 1992, 1984) hence it will increasingly be involved in internal and highly specialised debates and controversies. Moreover, highly structured and established fields are usually hierarchic and unequal, which means, according to Bourdieu that incumbent actors will tend towards orthodoxy and will be to some extent motivated by the defence of their own positions of dominance within the field, and newcomers will tend towards heterodoxy and will be more inclined to challenge the existing order of the field of action. Likewise, the more autonomous and specialised fields that emerge in highly differentiated societies will have their own forms of cultural and symbolic capital which might not be directly transferable to other social fields.

In Bourdieu's theory, one of the traits that joins agents in a field is the shared belief in the goods at stake (illusio) and the recognition of their own standing and that of their peers. In this theoretical perspective, fields have dominant and dominated actors; this depends heavily on the amounts (and forms) of capital that actors have. Concretely, a field is defined as:

[A] network or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations, they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 97)

An essential element to Bourdieu's theoretical construct is in Fact the connection between culture and power and the many mechanisms through which this is expressed. As he recognises that the French

society is growing more differentiated and thus new fields continue to emerge, as old ones gain more autonomy and differentiation, Bourdieu recognises the professionalization and the growing specialisation of the actors in the field of politics (1984, Swartz 1997). In that sense he argues that they become depositories of a power of representation and also decision-making. Moreover, Bourdieu identifies further actors that also become relevant in the field of politics; the pollsters, political analysts, opinion leaders and political journalists. These who are competent in opinion-making and public deliberation are not only those who have specific forms of institutionalised cultural capital and who are well-acquainted with the political jargon, but also those who deem themselves, and are deemed by others as competent (and therefore authorise) to opine and act in the field of politics. In *Distinction and On Politics*, Bourdieu argues that the middle- and upper-class habitus is much better suited for acting in the public sphere in general and in the field of politics in particular. The professionalization, the use of a complex and technical language are, in Bourdieu's view, part of the mechanisms of closure of the field of politics. In *Distinction* in the chapter about Culture and Politics, Bourdieu argues that it is no coincidence that abstention is not evenly spread across all social groups, but rather tends to concentrate among the working classes and the less educated. Moreover, in this chapter he conceptualises the significance of the 'don't know/ refuse to answer' in many political polls and concludes that these appear to be more common among the dominated groups, namely working-class people, less educated people and women.

He highlights that this 'technical competence' relies not only on understanding the language of politics but also on social competence and the ability to gain recognition as holder of a political opinion, as competent. (Bourdieu 409)

Technical competence is to social competence what the capacity to speak is to the right to speak: simultaneously a pre-condition and an effect. (409)

"Political opinion is not a purely informative judgement which catches on by the intrinsic force of its truth but an *idée fixe* containing pretension to become reality: (...) In other words, because it necessarily contains a power to mobilize and pretension to exist, political opinion is defined, not only by its informative content but also by the social force whereby it exists as a political force" (413)

"The authorized speech of status-generated competence, a powerful speech which helps to create it says, is answered by the silence of an equally status-linked incompetence, which is experienced as technical incapacity and leaves no choice but delegation" (413)

Bourdieu sees politics as a field in which specific forms of cultural capital are privileged. He considers political capital unevenly distributed because it remains in the hands of those with enough time and cultural capital (1984). As in other social fields, the dominant factions are the ones that set the boundaries and determine the limits of the imaginable and the acceptable.

4.4 The dominant fields

In this view of the social space, and in spite of the recognised autonomy of the other social fields, fields are not equally influential and they are not entirely independent from one another. Bourdieu identifies a series of hierarchies within the social space. The dominant fields in Bourdieu's sociology are the state, which is a meta field made of numerous sub-fields (1996) the field of power, which gathers the dominant factions of all social fields.

The field of power is a field of forces defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between forms of power, or between different species of capital. It is also simultaneously a field of struggles for power among the holders of different forms of power. It is a space of play and competition in which social agents and institutions which all possess the determinate quantity of specific capital (economic and cultural capital in particular) sufficient to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields [the economic field, the field of higher civil service or the state, the university field, and the intellectual field] confront one another in strategies aimed at preserving or transforming this balance of forces... This struggle for the imposition of the dominant principle leads, at every moment, to a balance in the sharing of power, that is, to what I call a division of the work of domination. It is also a struggle over the legitimate principle of legitimation and the legitimate mode of reproduction (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996, 76)

Bourdieu sees the fields of power and economics as the dominant fields in society and thus, other fields are (to a greater or lesser extent) structurally subordinated to these fields and are bound to be affected by the changes that occur within these fields. As societies become more complex and the division of labour becomes more specialised and differentiated, new fields tend to appear and the existing fields tend to increase their independence from the fields of power and economics (see: Bourdieu 1984, 1992, Girling 2004, Swartz 1997) and refine its mechanisms of differentiation.

"The autonomy is reflected in the field's ability to legitimate existing social relations within itself through a defence of its doxa, reason, and value for the field's existence" (Swartz 1997, pp. 126–127). Highly autonomous fields acquire forms of symbolic power to regulate the exchange of capitals within them." (Albright et al 2018, 27).

In the more differentiated societies, the mechanisms of domination become equally differentiated and diverse, there is a more complex division of the "labour of domination" (Bourdieu /Wacquant 2004, 7) which is spread among different fields and realms; education, finance, religion, science, culture, politics. The field of power is composed by the dominant actors of all fields and tends to be dominated by the dominant actors from the fields of economics and politics. Despite the relative autonomy that each field enjoys, Bourdieu's conception of dominants and dominated actors is based on their possession of capital which set the positions occupied within the social space (dominance or subordination). In Bourdieu's conception, the hierarchies within the fields tend to reflect the hierarchies within the social space, arguing that those actors who stand in positions of subordination in one field, would tend to also stand in similar positions within other fields (see: Swartz 1997, 130).

The field of power is, as other fields, a space of struggle for the goods at stake. In this case, it is the space in which the dominant factions of all fields compete for the hierarchy of their form of capital and for the supremacy of their own specific mechanisms of domination. This is shaped by the longstanding opposition between the predominance of cultural or financial capital as the main instrument of domination and the main element of distinction. Bourdieu mentions the opposition between the dominated sectors of the field of power and the dominant ones; clashes between representatives of education, intellectual and scientific elites with business associations and some political leaders. In Bourdieu's conception, these are clashes within the field of power and for the ultimate legitimation of a specific form of dominant capital (Bourdieu 1984).

4.5 Closing Mechanisms

In this conception, fields are semi-autonomous symbolic spaces which in many cases have porous borders and in others more clear-cut boundaries. Besides the shared belief in the goods at stake, the shared awareness of the actors and positions within the field, fields have further mechanisms of closure. The mechanisms of closure are the way in which a field asserts its boundaries and establishes a distinction between inside and outside. Some of the professional fields, like law and medicine have the possession of very specific qualifications as a closing mechanism. Other fields have more porous borders; the field of journalism, the literary field, the field of politics, among others. In these cases, the closing mechanism are diverse, the importance of being recognised as part of the field is even more salient, and the strategies can be subtler.

Even though Bourdieu devotes a great deal of attention to explaining the mechanisms by which the dominant factions in each field reproduce their power, namely by controlling the mechanisms of entrance, by exercising symbolic (and in some specific cases, economic or physical violence) he also mentions that transformations are possible and, thus, the dominated or outsider factions can turn gain power and become the dominant actors themselves. In *Distinction* he mentions the example of Manet and the impressionists and how they went from being outsiders in the field of artistic production to gaining an important position as highly recognised artists.

4.6 Power the state and the social space

Bourdieu considers the state a "meta field" that exercises structural, physical and symbolic domination over the rest of the social space. Bourdieu considers the state the ultimate standard of orthodoxy and neutrality as it sets the boundaries for the other fields and asserts domination through numerous institutions and agencies that belong to different sub-fields; regulatory agencies, military, police, education departments, welfare departments, etc. (Bourdieu 2018, Swartz 1997). By doing so, state

exercises control over the acceptable mechanisms of action, the accepted and legitimate forms of education, etc.

As a meta-field, the state is connected with the broader field of power, but it is not its entirety, since the field of power is also integrated by dominant factions from the fields of finance, industry, science, arts, journalism, etc. Moreover, Bourdieu's theory considers the state as a meta-field and not a unified field because in his view, the state is not always unified and has factions and sectors that are often in opposition to one another. As an expression of these intra-state divisions, Bourdieu mentions a division between the right and left hands of the state; as the right hand is concerned with fiscal balance, defence, the left hand of the state is concerned with the provision of welfare services. In many fields, legitimation necessarily goes through the state.

Given that Bourdieu's sociology strongly stresses the symbolic and cultural aspects of power and domination, it is worth mentioning that he also stresses the role of the state in establishing (or at least helping shape) what is considered legitimate culture and legitimate channels of expression: from the establishment and reproduction of an official language and officially accepted ways of using this official language (Bourdieu 2011) to the establishment of education and cultural institutions which set the main boundaries of what is considered legitimate culture. The language and culture that are fixed and reproduced by the state are usually those of the middle- and educated classes. This becomes the language of the official instances and the public sphere (Bourdieu 2011).

The field of politics is the semi-autonomous structure that gathers individual and collective actors who are in direct pursuit of political power; usually political parties, politicians, but also professional commentators, political scientists and academic experts, political advisers and journalists. In Bourdieu's sociology, the field of politics has specific forms of capital and specific "closure mechanisms" which tend to exclude people with a working-class, female habitus. (Bourdieu 1984, 2018, 2011, Swartz 1997, Girling 2004).

4.7 Habitus

Habitus is one of the building blocks of Bourdieu's theory; the incorporated "structuring structure" which is a consequence and by-product of the agents' positions in the social space (and in given fields) and, at the time, helps sustain these positions (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1992, Bourdieu 2001, Crossley 2003). Bourdieu conceives the habitus as a "second nature" a deeply internalised mechanism which guides action as well as interpretation and facilitates the reproduction of positions and structures of social fields and the social space is the habitus. The habitus includes habits, dispositions, corporal expression (clothing, ways of moving) styles, taste which are shaped by different factors in the

socialisation. In his study about the Kabyle society, Bourdieu mostly concentrates in the disconnection between a rural traditional habitus and an expanding capitalist neo liberal economy and he offers detailed depictions of the subtle differences between the female and the male habitus (Bourdieu 2001). In *Distinction*, Bourdieu explores the dimensions of education (cultural capital) social class (financial capital) in habitus and the ways in which taste in food, cultural consumption and even political preferences can be an expression of a position in the social space and a specific habitus.

A person's habitus is unique in that it results from sustained action within a specific position in the social space, it results to a great extent from the primary socialisation; the social origin and the parent's taste, level of education and leisure activities, the religious customs, the social, cultural and financial capital available. The habitus, in turn, ends up shaping the agents' preferences, mannerisms, and frames of perception. The idea of "second nature" suggests basically that a person's habitus allows her to be able to improvise within certain social spaces, but also will make her feel uncomfortable and out of place in others. The habitus has a strong connection with self- and external identity, but it is deeply connected with the specific recognition of different forms of capital and with the kinds of networks available to a person. In Bourdieu's conception, a habitus becomes a "second nature" to the point that agents are able to navigate the social space confidently and they are able to draw from a repertoire of actions and reactions to improvise and react *naturally* to given circumstances. The habitus shapes a set of taken for granted actions, rituals and cognitive frames.

"This suggests the need to return to, and elaborate, Bourdieu's distinction between primary and secondary habitus, introduced in his work on education and underlying his analysis of the nexus of class and taste in *Distinction*. The primary habitus is the set of dispositions one acquires in early childhood, slowly and imperceptibly, through familial osmosis and familiar immersion; it is fashioned by tacit and diffuse "pedagogical labour with no precedent"; it constitutes our baseline social personality as well as "the basis for the ulterior constitution of any other habitus" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 [1970]:42-6). The secondary habitus is any system of transposable schemata that becomes grafted subsequently, through specialized pedagogical labour that is typically shortened in duration, accelerated in pace, and explicit in organization." (Wacquant 2014, 7)

"It entails the vesting of one's life energies into the objects, undertakings, and agents that populate the world under consideration. In other words, to make an adept pugilist (pianist, politician or professor) takes acquiring in practice the distinctive cognitive constructs and the skilled moves as well as developing the proper appetite for the stakes of the corresponding social game." (Wacquant 2014, p. 9)

As previously stated, a person's habitus is connected to the field and to the social space and the position occupied therein. Therefore, those who are in dominant positions within the social space, will develop dominant habitus, and those who are in dominated positions will tend to internalise this by developing a subordinate habitus. Bourdieu analyses this from the perspective of social classes, but also from the male-female perspective (*Distinction 1984, The Masculine Domination 2001*) and presents numerous examples of how specific forms of socialisation are internalised and become taken for granted and which reproduce and justify structures of inequality and domination. The habitus, as conceived by Bourdieu

has an element of both; internal recognition that involves some degree of naturalisation of a certain position, and external recognition as being in a certain position within the social space. In that sense, the habitus is confirmed and sustained by the internalised self-recognition which is expressed in action, preferences and mannerisms, but also in the external recognition, which is expressed in the ways a person is addressed and treated by others.

For Bourdieu, this means that practices or actions cannot be understood simply in such objective terms as the rules, values and discourses of a field. Nor can they be understood purely subjectively in terms of individual uncontextualized choices or decisions. People do think and act in strategic ways and try to use the rules of the game to their own advantage. Yet at the same time, he argues, they act unconsciously, unaware that their goals, motives and aspirations are not spontaneous or natural, but shaped by their habitus. Bourdieu argues that the habitus of a player combines with the structure of any field to render some thoughts and actions unthinkable. What is thinkable and unthinkable within various discourses is performed in actors' habitus. (Albright et al 2018, 13)

Bourdieu describes the habitus as "structuring structure" which is, simultaneously shaped by the social space and actors' position within it, but at the same time, the habitus helps naturalise and reproduce the social order and the system of ingrained inequalities. This is Bourdieu's compromise to the micro-macro dilemma. As the agent is shaped and influenced in her perceptions, tastes and potential trajectories by her position in the social space, and at the same time, through her action and her positioning in interacting with others, she helps reproduce the system's structures and inequalities. A person's position in the social space is determined by their possession of different forms of capital.

Despite the fact that most of Bourdieu's uses of habitus are focused on primary socialisation and its long-lasting consequences in terms of mannerisms, modes of perception, preferences etc., the concept of a secondary habitus is also relevant for this theoretical strand (Bourdieu 1984, 1977, Wacquant 2014, 3). While the primary habitus is shaped predominantly by the family's position in the social space (ibid.) and by gender relations, a secondary habitus results from sustained involvement with other communities of action, outside of the realm of the family. Wacquant explored the potential of the secondary habitus as an analytical lens for studying the incorporation into communities of action outside of the family, he studied the malleability and the acquisition of community-specific dispositions and the incorporation of a given self-recognition, an *illusio*, and a set of possible moves and actions to navigate context-specific situations (in this case, boxing fights):

"I use the collection of "carnal ethnographies" of martial arts and combat sports assembled by Raul Sanchez and Dale Spencer under the title *Fighting Scholars* to spotlight the fruitfulness of deploying habitus as both empirical object (explanandum) and method of inquiry (modus cognitionis). The incarnate study of incarnation supports five propositions that clear up tenacious misconceptions about habitus and bolster Bourdieu's dispositional theory of action: (1) far from being a "black box," habitus is fully amenable to empirical inquiry; (2) the distinction between primary (generic) and secondary (specific) habitus enables us to capture the malleability of dispositions; (3) habitus is composed of cognitive, conative and affective elements: categories, skills, and desires; (4) habitus allows us to turn carnality from problem to resource for the production of sociological knowledge; and (5) thus to realize that all social

agents are, like martial artists, suffering beings collectively engaged in embodied activities staged inside circles of shared commitments” (Wacquant 2014, 3)

In that sense, the secondary habitus is an expanded set of dispositions, frames of perceptions and ways of doing things that actors develop through sustained practice. The secondary habitus is not conceptualised to be a replacement of the primary habitus; given that Bourdieu’s theory parts precisely from the premise that habitus is deeply internalised and, thus, mutability is possible but gradual and takes time. Rather, the secondary habitus is developed in time, through sustained interaction with new communities of action (usually related to school, professional instances, etc.) Given that the spaces occupied by actor

s is strongly related to their primary socialisation, and the way in which they make sense of the social space and act within these spaces, the primary habitus can (and usually will) play a role in shaping the secondary habitus. It is precisely based on this premise that Bourdieu argues in *Distinction*, that the field of politics and the public sphere in general, tend to be dominated by people with a certain type of habitus; middle- or upper class (high financial capital), educated (high cultural capital) mostly male.

4.8 The Capital

Bourdieu’s concept of class shows the influence of both, Marx and Weber in his work (Schwingel 1995, 28). Bourdieu considers that a person’s position within the social space is determined by the possession of capital, which is in his definition, accumulated work. Bourdieu distinguishes different forms of capital which are usually interchangeable and frequently interconnected.

In Bourdieu’s theory the first form of capital is financial capital, which are essentially all financial assets a person has; money, properties, investments, etc. These assets are hereditary and thus can be passed on from generation to generation. While profoundly important in Bourdieu’s theory, financial capital is not the sole granter of social recognition nor is it the only source of domination.

Besides financial capital, Bourdieu mentions social capital as an important asset for social advancement, a person’s social capital are the connections a person has, that can help her advance socially. As defined in Bourdieu’s work, this is the “more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119). In Bourdieu’s work (1984) these networks are strongly related to a person’s position within the social space and they require “work” and “effort” in order to be upheld. Social capital has an implication of reciprocity. In Bourdieu’s sociology social capital is profoundly related to class; it is connected with financial capital as well as cultural capital, since it involves agents in similar positions (sometimes similar occupations, or attending similar schools, members of the same kinds of leisure associations) establishing connections (based on a perceived

homophily) that could help them improve their positioning in the social space. Bourdieu's studies about kinship and reciprocity explored the intrinsic value of this form of capital and the efforts made to uphold these connections (this is visible in his study about the Kabyle societies and their marriage rituals, but in industrialised societies it is visible in the connections people have and which become important in accomplishing their goals. In his studies about the Kabyle societies, Bourdieu identifies social and symbolic capital as the few forms of social distinction, hence a lot of time and efforts were devoted to the maintaining honour and the existing relations of reciprocity and support. (Bourdieu 1977).

Bourdieu's social capital is second to Putnam's (2000) use of this concept. If in Bourdieu's theory social capital is seen as a class issue, Putnam sees it as a public good (Julien 2015, 356). Putnam's well known conception of social capital is more connected with a notion of trust, social cohesion and social integration (Putnam 2000, Joppke 1986) which can be measured in people's willingness to trust others, membership in different kinds of associations; volunteering, social causes, sports, politics, etc. Putnam's social capital has been cited in the studies about social integration, social and political participation, as well as migration studies. Putnam's conception of bridging and bonding social capital has been particularly relevant for the studies of migration.

Perhaps second only to financial capital, Bourdieu recognises cultural capital as a decisive mechanism for determining the stand in the social space, but also for the reproduction and legitimation of other forms of capital (1984, 1998) Bourdieu recognises cultural capital in three different forms; institutionalised cultural capital which are all officially certified skills; schools' diplomas, university titles, certifiable language skills, etc. Besides this, Bourdieu recognises incorporated cultural capital which is essentially the acquired skills and knowledge that a person has. Likewise, incorporated cultural capital is also made up of the manners, the social skill and the ability to understand and navigate social situations. While these forms of cultural capital are indeed interchangeable for financial capital and social advancement, they are not hereditary; neither degrees nor knowledge itself can be passed on from parents to children. At this point it is perhaps important to clarify that non hereditary does not detach these forms of cultural capital from the familial context, but it means that they cannot be given directly (as financial assets can) but that they have to be cultivated. Nonetheless, the influence of the familial context in the cultivation of these forms of cultural capital is paramount in Bourdieu's sociology (1998).

It is at this point where Bourdieu sees the departure from mechanisms of class reproduction and legitimation of the pre-modern society; if before the educational expansion and the establishment of democracy and capitalism, if previously the inheritance of privileges and prestige were simply familial, in the second half of the XX century this is scholastic (Bourdieu 1998, Joppke 1986). The idea that institutionalised and incorporated cultural capital become mechanisms to dissimulate and legitimise the reproduction of inequalities is one of Bourdieu's core arguments and will be explored later in this sub chapter. (see: Bourdieu 1998, 1984)

Lastly, Bourdieu recognises materialised cultural capital which is the possession of cultural goods; books, musical instruments, antiquities, paintings, and other forms of *legitimate* cultural products. The three forms of cultural capital are relevant not only as interchangeable assets that can improve a person's chances in the economic field, but as markers of distinction, as mechanisms that confer symbolic capital to those who possess them.

In the case of the institutionalised cultural capital, it is important to note that Bourdieu sees the advancement not only in terms of the volume of this kind of cultural capital (i.e., The number of diplomas and degrees) but also in terms of the prestige attached to the certificates that attest for the possession of certain forms of institutionalised cultural capital (Joppke 1986). This is most clearly exemplified in Bourdieu's analysis of the education structures and the elite university education represented by the *Ecole Supérieure* (Joppke 1986, Bourdieu 1998). In *The State Nobility* Bourdieu claims that the *Ecoles Supérieures* have a dominant position within the French field of education, hence, the titles from these universities enjoy greater prestige than those from others. Furthermore, he argues, they have a connection with the elite state institutions that ensures that graduates from the *Ecoles Supérieures* end up in managing positions within the state institutions which grants prestige to the *Ecoles Supérieures* but also to the institutions themselves (Bourdieu 1998). This work carefully reconstructs the mechanisms through which these institutions reproduce inequalities and argues that the incidence of family background on academic performance (partly through access through diffuse modes of learning, through the advantage of the middle-class habitus in using the acceptable language forms, etc.) generates profound inequalities in the access to these forms of capital; middle-class families are usually closer and abler to provide educational support for pupils (through tutors, extra-curricular activities, musical instruments, etc.) and of providing diffuse modes of learning in the form of museum visits and similar activities. Furthermore, middle- and upper-class pupils gain a certain acquaintance with the legitimate culture outside the context of the school (ibid.) and thus develop a taste for cultural products and activities that grant symbolic capital.

The access to cultural and financial capital are not only indicators of a person's chances of social advancement, but also dispositions that will shape their preferences and connections with others; in *Distinction* Bourdieu shows how taste and preferences are strongly related to the possession of certain forms of capital. The possession of capital and the preference for certain forms of leisure and expression are, ultimately, also expressions of distinction and social class; this work shows, for instance, how museum visits, operas are frequently the preference of the groups with higher volumes of both, cultural and financial capital. Bourdieu names this *amor fatti*, the inclination to like what you know and know what you like. In Bourdieu's words; "an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has" and, particularly those with the lowest volumes of capital develop a "taste for necessity" that entails a pragmatic, use-oriented relationship with goods, and a preference for the practical, concrete over the symbolic, a preference for quantity over quality. (Bourdieu, 1984, 175)

Ultimately, the positioning in a social space, with a certain volume of financial, cultural, and social capital shapes not only the preferences (in terms of leisure, food, politics) but also the very frames of perception and aspiration (Bourdieu 1984, 1998). Agents incorporate and naturalise these dispositions and these frames of reference and they will, in Bourdieu's sociology, shape their second nature and their realm of possibilities. For Bourdieu those with the highest volumes of capital (cultural and financial) tend to be split into factions and, in that sense, struggle for one another for the symbolic dominance and prestige. In a nutshell, Bourdieu argues that the education system tends to reproduce existing inequalities and that it often "masks privilege as talent".

4.9 Symbolic Power

As many scholars recognise, one of Bourdieu's most paramount contributions to social sciences and his main distance from Marxism, is the attention and the relevance devoted to symbolic systems and the symbolic dimension of domination. In that sense, Bourdieu is said to follow Max Weber's postulates in arguing that domination cannot function solely based on direct coercion and force (neither economic nor physical) and that it requires some form of legitimation in order to be accepted and reproduced (Swartz 1997, 2013). Bourdieu's sociology devotes significant efforts to establishing the connection between culture, symbols, and power, and ultimately, the ubiquity of power and systems of domination in almost every realm of life and particularly in the realm of everyday assumptions (Swartz 1997, 2013). Swartz summarises the functions of symbolic systems as follows; cognition, communication, and social differentiation, in other words, Bourdieu's sociology sees symbols and symbolic systems not only as integrative mechanisms but also as instruments of domination:

Symbolic systems are codes that channel deep structural meanings shared by all members of a culture. Conceptual systems, therefore, function simultaneously as instruments of communication and instruments of knowledge" (Bourdieu 1971; 295). As instruments of both knowledge and communication, symbolic systems provide, as Durkheim argues logical integration, which is a necessary condition of moral integration. (Swartz 1997, 83).

Bourdieu considers symbolic systems as structuring and structured structure; they not only help support and shape shared understandings in society, but they also express a lot of what a society's taken-for-granted is. (Swartz 1997, 83).

The relevance of the symbolic dimension is ubiquitous in Bourdieu's work, it is one of the cornerstones of this theoretical toolbox and his concept of domination. Still, the works in which the concepts of symbolic order and symbolic power are more thoroughly conceptualised in *The Masculine Domination* and *Distinction*. Bourdieu assigns symbols and symbolic forms a strong role when it comes to understanding social struggles and mechanisms of domination; inspired by the French structuralist linguistics (Swartz 1997, 84) Bourdieu argues that societies attach symbolic dimensions to their immediate reality (hence, capital can have a signifier and a significant) and often do this through

dichotomies of opposition and contrast; opposition between high/low, dark/ light, male/ female, etc. Bourdieu's core argument is that these oppositions are socially constructed and that they often become naturalised and regarded as self-evident truths. Moreover, in Bourdieu's sociology these dichotomies are often the ways in which social structures become internalised and thus become part of the cognitive structures as well. (Swartz 1997, 85).

Bourdieu's analyses explore the ways in which dominated actors in a social space adopt the dominated positions but also the schemes of cognition of the dominated factions; in *The Masculine Domination*, for example, Bourdieu recognises this in the situations in which women (or ethnic minorities, or any other dominated faction) accepts and incorporate the schemes of cognition of the dominant factions as their own. In turn, the dominant actors are also the ones who can shape the symbolic dimension and to shape and structure symbols themselves. The meanings drawn from the specific social objects also justify and support the social order so that it appears natural; in *The Masculine Domination*, the differences in the male and female anatomies serve to justify the differences in their social and familial roles. Bourdieu's work argues that aside from a physiological difference, the differentiation made by the Kabyle (which he also identifies, albeit in lesser and subtler forms, in France and other Western societies) is mostly based on symbolic assumptions and meanings attached to the female character and the female anatomy. Following his idea of the oppositional dichotomies, Bourdieu argues that the female, in the Kabyle society, is defined in negative terms; while men struggle for honour and visibility, women gain honour by being invisible (Bourdieu 1977, Swartz 1997)

While Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic domination is focused on the Kabyle society, he also makes reference to persisting inequalities in France and other Western societies; Bourdieu argues that after decades of feminism women in France and in other Western societies have gained more spaces in the public sphere but they remained, nonetheless, recipients of subtle and constant forms of symbolic violence because their societies continue to associate the male with the dominance, competence and "neutral". While *The Masculine Domination* concentrates mostly on the domination derived from the male-female dichotomy, *Distinction* explores the symbolic dimension of the social order from a broader perspective in that it includes the hierarchies generated by a more differentiated economic and social system. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu argues that the work on the generation of symbols is the work of the dominant classes, given that the others lack the time and the interest in symbolic matters (1984)

In Bourdieu's work, the exercise of symbolic violence is mostly undetectable and often exercised with the complicity of the recipients thereof. By arguing this, Bourdieu clarifies that he is not "blaming the victim" but merely explaining how the subordinate groups end up accepting the existing structures, shaped by dominating groups, and adopting the existing mechanisms of cognition and frames of understanding that have been developed by the dominant groups (Swartz 1997, 67).

Symbolic power is in Bourdieu's sociology the power to define the rules of the game, the legitimate skills, and dispositions (ibid.) and establish these as self-evident truths. The uneven distribution of symbolic power echoes the uneven distribution of the other forms of capital in society, even though symbolic power has a value on its own and a logic on its own. This uneven distribution of symbolic power shapes what Bourdieu conceptualises as the symbolic order; the naturalised and self-evident distinctions that attach connotations of prestige and legitimacy to certain kinds of dispositions over others (in Bourdieusian studies, it is the dispositions of the Parisian well-educated middle and upper classes). Moreover, the symbolic order also attaches specific connotations to other traits, like accents, clothing style, leisure preferences, phenotypes, etc. In that sense, symbolic power is the ability to label, to correct and impose the legitimate forms of expression, leisure, clothing, etc. A given symbolic order, in which not only the dispositions but also other traits of the agents, have a second connotation which grants (or denies) them prestige and social recognition relies not only on the dominant factions' ability to create and sustain this order, but ultimately, it relies on the dominated factions and their acceptance of the frames, concepts and elements of recognition set up by the dominant classes. The more a symbolic order is considered "natural" or "self-evident" the more effective the exercise of symbolic power has been (Bosay/ Arlsan 2019, Hallet 2007, Swartz 1997)

Bourdieu recognises that the dominance over the symbolic order, and the ability to exercise symbolic violence and to shape the contours of what is considered prestigious and legitimate as a form of capital. Symbolic capital as the ability to exercise symbolic violence, the possession of social recognition and legitimacy.

In the Kabylia society, symbolic capital is derived from the conservation of the female honour, the expansion of the male honour, the cultivation of kinship relations and other forms of social capital, in the more differentiated societies, symbolic capital is a form of prestige and recognition of an agent or group as being legitimate and thus, confers the ability to frame discourse and to dominate the production of meaning and the boundaries of what is acceptable and legitimate. Bourdieu argues in *Distinction*:

What is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes and systems which are the basis of the representations of the groups and therefore of their mobilization and demobilization: the evocative power of an utterance which puts things in a different light (. . .) shows something else (. . .); a separative power, a distinction, diacrisis, discretio, drawing discrete units out of indivisible continuity, difference out of the undifferentiated. (Bourdieu 1984, 475)

In that sense, social actors struggle over the power of definition and classification, and the legitimate classifications generate symbolic hierarchies and distinctions which in turn legitimise other structural (material) hierarchies

The very title *Distinction* serves as a reminder that what is commonly called distinction, that is, a certain quality of bearing and manners, most often considered innate (one speaks of distinction naturelle, "natural refinement"), is nothing other than difference, a gap, a distinctive

feature, in short, a relational property existing only in and through its relation with other properties. (ibid.)

In more differentiated societies symbolic capital can be a property of society at large, but also field-specific; certain forms of cultural capital, of social capital, as well as certain instances of recognition and mannerism can grant a social agent with field-specific symbolic capital (Girling 2004, Swartz 1997). In Bourdieu's sociology, social actors can derive symbolic capital from certain forms of cultural capital (*Grande Ecoles*, as well as knowledge of classical music and recognised literature). While this has been questioned by some sociologists who argue that the strong symbolic value set on so-called high culture is something more typical of the French context does not necessarily apply in other contexts, there is a recognition of the relevance of certain forms of education in symbolic capital. Bourdieu's literary sociology provides an approach into the accumulation of the field-specific symbolic capital; the recognition as authentic (as opposed to commercial or popular). Symbolic domination and symbolic capital are not detached from the other forms of capital, but it has a logic of its own. Recently, sociologists have also resorted to the concept of symbolic capital in order to explore the dynamics of migration-societies and how the assumed symbolic order tends to attach different positions and meanings to languages, ethnicities, accents, phenotypes, etc. (see: Arslan/ Bosay, 2019)

4.10 Limitations and criticisms

In regards to the limitations that other scholars have identified in Bourdieu's theoretical framework, most of them are directed at the determinism of which Bourdieu is accused and thus, argue, that this is predominantly a theory about social stability (Bourdieu does in fact emphasise the processes through which inequalities and relationships of domination and subordination are reproduced) but that it falls short when it comes to explaining social change (Fligstein/ McAdam 2012, Girling 2004, Crossley 2003) or that it leaves little room for the conceptualisation of resistance and incrementalism. Crossley (2002, 2003, 2004) argues that Bourdieu's theoretical toolbox seems to consider social movements and resistance mostly at times of crisis but seems to disregard the underlying networks and information exchanges that remain active even at times of social stability. In that sense, Crossley (2003, 2004) stresses the importance of regarding social movements and challenges to power not only as episodes of social disorganisation during which "the habitus is temporarily deactivated" but to consider conflict as a part of power relations and consider the abeyant structures that lie dormant, and which allow for these episodes of intense contention to occur.

In his work about contentious fields and the radical habitus (based on his studies of the movement of psychiatric survivors) Crossley draws from Bourdieu's concepts, albeit stressing some of the differences between his own use and that of Bourdieu. It is precisely the above-mentioned conception that

Bourdieu's work is too deterministic and over emphasises the workings of mechanisms of social stability and social reproduction in detriment of a more thorough analysis of the persistent structures and networks of conflict and contradiction that facilitate the existence and survival of social movements:

Girling (2004) and Swartz (1997) also mention this limitation in Bourdieu's conception of power; that there is little attention to resistance, that is considered deterministic and overlooks many of the underlying structures that are challenging power. In particular, this has to do with the concept of symbolic power. While both scholars highlight the explicatory possibilities that the concept of symbolic power opens for the study of domination, they question the determinism implied in this concept, and argue that while there are hierarchic symbolic orders and the power to shape and define them is unevenly distributed, there are nonetheless moments and possibilities of resisting these symbolic orders and in which subordinated actors can in fact make their definitions and their frames mainstream

"Bourdieu is uncompromising on *parité*. In *La domination masculine* (1998b: 124), he writes that even if the feminist movement has contributed a great deal to the enlargement of political discussion and confrontation on issues that were previously evaded or ignored, one cannot ignore the negative and for the most part unconscious attitudes – both of men and women – which 'contribute so strongly to the social relations of domination between the sexes'.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it could be argued, contrary to Bourdieu's interpretation, that the symbolic power that facilitates male domination is not necessarily a one-way process. There are instances in Bourdieu's work of what may be termed 'reverse symbolic power', when the dominated reject dominant values and instead proclaim an alternative set of values" (Girling 2004, 60)

Nonetheless, Girling recognises that the limits of habitus are not clear in Bourdieu's work, and that some of his later works appear less deterministic and thus, open more space for resistance and challenge to the assumed symbolic order:

There are instances in Bourdieu's work of what may be termed 'reverse symbolic power', when the dominated reject dominant values and instead proclaim an alternative set of values – as with those who demonstrated in 1995 for a more interventionist state needed to bring about social reforms (ibid.)

Among further criticisms that Bourdieu's theoretical toolbox has raised, David Swartz cites Caile's questionings; first, in spite of being a critique of economic determinism Bourdieu's model appears to be very deterministic, second, that his theory of habitus doesn't really specify where the author sees the limits of habitus (pre conscious action and thought) and the start of calculated strategy for social ascension and third, that his theory denotes an assumption of humans having an irredeemable orientation to pursue material interests and accumulate power (Swartz 1997, 78). Furthermore, Swartz questions Bourdieu's use of the concepts of calculation and interest, which he considers are not very clear throughout Bourdieu's work. (Swartz 1997, 82). Since Bourdieu argues that the habitus creates a feeling for certain spaces, tastes and mechanisms of action, but he also talks about calculation and a constant

struggle to improve their positions for some scholars the limits between the automated response pre-determined by the habitus and the rational calculation are not entirely clear.

Albeit the criticisms, scholars who have studied Bourdieu's work also recognise that the concepts of habitus, field and capital do not remain identical throughout his works and that his works adopt a more flexible and less deterministic approach towards the end of his life. (Swartz 1997, Girling 2004). This work specifically tackles the activist habitus. Given that the context is not one of intense social and political agitation, during which one could argue that the habitus is "suspended" it is necessary to consider existing social orders and symbolic mechanisms of power reproduction. Still political activism is an activity that entails constant reflections about power and social dynamics and, to some extent, an expectation (inclination) towards change. In that sense, the questionings about the presumed determinism in Bourdieu's habitus are to be considered, as well as the expansions of this concept. Bourdieu's seminal theory of habitus and field informs much of this analysis. Nonetheless, much of the idea of an activist habitus and the fields of activism studied here, are informed by Crossley's uses of habitus in the context of social movements (2003, 2004). Firstly, a strong emphasis on reflectivity as an important part of the activist habitus; an activist, regardless of her concrete inclination, develops a sense for the game of politics and deliberation, and this is necessarily linked to a habit of self-reflection and even self-socialisation. As Crossley argues, a radical habitus is not merely a product of a situation of instability but is developed in time and relies on long-standing abeyant structures and networks. Some of them will develop oppositional habitus which part from their own position of disadvantage in the field and in the social space. Likewise, activists don't come to social movements like blank slates and thus, Bourdieu and Wacquant differentiation between primary and secondary habitus is very relevant in this context (Crossley 2003, 2004, Bourdieu 1984)

4.11 Social Movements and Habitus

In his works about the movement of psychiatric survivors in Britain, Crossley (2002, 2003, 2004) uses the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus and field in order to present how the sustained engagement in these communities of action were relevant in the activists' own assumption of their activities, their repertoires of action and frameworks of condition. As mentioned above, Bourdieu's social theory has been often received as a theory of stability more than a theory of challenge (Crossley 2003, Girling 2004, Swartz) or contention.

Crossley recognises many valuable contributions that the field-habitus theory can make to the study of social movements, but he is nonetheless critical of a perceived determinism in Bourdieu's theory and a lack of attention to social movements and resistance beyond the times of crisis. Crossley considers that the 'normal times' are also times in which activists and networks are operating to keep the flame alive.

“Bourdieu tends to view radical political activity and movements as an exception to the rule, and even as an exception to his own theory. He fails to recognize the lines of continuity which connect such temporally distant events; the ‘submerged networks’ (Melucci, 1986) or ‘abeyance structures’ (Taylor, 1989) which keep radicalism alive between the ‘moments of madness’ (Zolberg, 1972), and the degree of ordinariness of protest that has prompted some writers to suggest that we live in a ‘social movement society’ (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998).” (Crossley 2003, 44)

Crossley questions Bourdieu’s conception of crisis and his assumption that habitus, as a structuring structure, helped sustain stability and reproduce inequalities, and that it is during times of crisis when the habitus is temporarily suspended, and actors can act in their own best interest. Crossley argues that it is only part of the habits that become inactive at times of crisis and that it is at this time when previously learned repertoires of action and discourses. In Crossley’s work, these are not the simple rational-choice action of people following recipes for contention; these are internalised and known, and this allows for what the author calls “coherent deformation” meaning that the activists could draw and select from a set of action, discourses and networks, but also to improvise and adapt these repertoires to the situation and expectations. (Crossley 2003, 46). In a nutshell, Crossley’s activist habitus is developed through participation in protest and at the same time, it helps sustain the perpetuation of protest.

The research discussed above suggests that, just as exposure to works of art generates a motivation towards further artistic consumption, so too involvement in political environments generates a motivation towards further involvement. Unpacking this slightly, I suggest that involvement in movements and protest potentiates acquisition of (1) perceptual-cognitive schemas which dispose agents to question, criticize and distrust political elites and processes, (2) the political know-how to transform this distrust and criticism into action, (3) an ethos which encourages engagement (such as Parkin [1968] and Eder [1985, 1993] have discussed in relation to participants in new social movements) and binds a sense of individual meaning and worth to it, (4) a ‘feel’ for protest and organizing which allows agents to derive purpose and enjoyment from it, to ‘believe’ in it and to feel ‘at home’ doing it. Only some people protest, according to this point of view (Crossley 2003, 50)

At the core of Crossley’s use of the habitus theory to analyse activism lies his own argument that it does not suffice to have a good cause. While he recognises the importance of gathering resources for mobilisation, he also stresses the importance of incorporating certain repertoires of practice and schemes of cognition, and of “feeling at home” engaging in social movements. This goes beyond a mere rationalisation of personal interests or the pursue of a good cause given that the activists themselves keep the movement alive and sustain the belief in the game.

Crossley argumentation in favour of studying social movements from the point of view of the radical habitus is also based on the evidence that shows that activists often seek careers and lifestyles that are compatible (or coherent) with their activism, ideals or that at least allow them enough time and energy for political activism (McAdam 1989, Passy/Giugni 2000). In Crossley’s words, using habitus in the study of contention challenges a RMT assumption that activism results from having the availability and being exposed to situations of disadvantage, given that committed activists would be “creating” availability. To this some of the more recent works on political consumerism and environmental habitus

would add that activists seek out “lifestyles” and habits that are compatible with their ideals and their activism.

In Crossley’s analysis, social movements are seen as fields and each field has its own logic, its own repertoires of action and self-evident truths which the older and more experienced activists pass on to the new ones. In that sense, Crossley argues that given that each field pursues different goals and has ultimately different internal logics and hierarchies, they will also generate different habitus; a habitus, therefore, responds to the demands and the logic set by the field in which the activist moves. Moreover, in his analyses of the psychiatric survivors’ movement, Crossley stresses the relevance of his chosen interactionist approach to study social movements, given the significance that the sustained processes of socialisation and learning that the activists are involved in, but also the relevance of symbolic hierarchies, status, and symbolic capital within social movements. In that sense, Crossley refers to the relevance of certain high-status figures in the psychiatric survivors’ movement; these were psychiatrists who questioned many of the logics of the discipline and openly spoke about the shortcomings and granted more societal relevance to the claims made by the activists. By referring to these examples, Crossley illustrates the importance that actors with certain forms of capital can have for social movements, especially when it comes to helping them gain media attention and recognition outside of the movement itself.

In addition, Crossley’s work about psychiatric survivors stresses the salience of internalised conceptions and practices and the importance of symbolic elements within activism. Furthermore, Crossley agrees with Bourdieu (1984) and Parkin (1968) by stating that the middle-classes are better disposed for activism, given that they possess enough cultural capital and a critical attitude.

Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field, allow Crossley to study and explain the movement of psychiatric survivors as a field of action with its own goods at stake, salient actors, dispositions, and rivalries. Moreover, as such, the field has moments of more intense confrontations and more saliency within the social space, but this field approach allows an understanding that goes beyond protest as an sporadic episodes of outburst and instability, but rather of social movements as symbolic spaces of constant struggle in which there are engaged actors, pedagogic actors that are “teaching newcomers the ways of the given field” (Crossley 2003, 2004) and thus helping maintain the illusion of this given field alive, even at times at which activists become disappointed or the issues the movement is raising lose salience within the social space.

This conception of activist habitus or an activist ethos, part from a situation of sustained participation within a given community of engagement; it is not conceived as the direct result of occasionally voting or sporadically showing up to protest or to sign a petition. In that sense, it resonates with much of the participation literature that concentrates on long-term activism as something that not only shapes and

sustains movements, but also as an instance of ongoing socialisation for activists. In a nutshell, Crossley summarises the contributions of the field theory to the study of mental health movements and discussions:

This theory has been selected, in part, on the basis of its value as a framework for analysing social movements in general (a-c, 2003) and mental health movements in particular (Crossley 1998a, b, 1999a, b, 2002b, c), but also because it incorporates most of what is useful in the aforementioned perspectives on power (interactionism, Marxism, etc.), whilst avoiding the problems that are particular to each of them, respectively. Bourdieu's conceptual toolbox and particularly his concepts of habitus and symbolic power, for example, are able to sensitize us to the ways in which behaviour and experience are moulded in relationships of power, much as the work of the interactionists does, without attracting the problematic connotations that attach to their concepts of 'role', 'script' and 'labelling'. Furthermore, Bourdieu's framework, whilst sensitive to the social microcosm, also transcends that level, allowing us to focus upon the 'bigger picture' of the mental health field at a national and even international level, in a way which is not true of the interactionists (Scully 1984). On the other hand, the advantages of Bourdieu's framework relative to more macrocosmic approaches, such as the Marxist and Foucauldian approaches, are, first, that it is not restricted to this level either and can focus in upon the microcosmic issues raised by the interactionists and, second, that Bourdieu's concept of 'field' captures more precisely the dynamic, conflictual, pluralized and fluid nature of the world of mental health, past and present, than those favoured by Marxists and Foucauldian, respectively, i.e. 'system', 'institution', 'apparatus' (dispositif), 'technology'. The mental health world has never enjoyed the settled and homogenous structure suggested by these latter concepts. It has always manifested the dynamism and plurality suggested by 'field' and still does (Crossley 2004, 163)

In the study of political activism, the concepts of field and habitus can help with the recognition of the symbolic dimension of power, as well as the understanding of recognition of habitus as incorporated dispositions, ways of thinking and ways of doing things that also shape the ways in which people act politically. Moreover, the concept of symbolic power can help understand the ways in which actors behave towards one another and towards the field. Likewise, this concept can clarify the ways in which forms of capital and the spaces occupied in the social space are also charged with meaning. Likewise, understanding activism as a set of fields (closer to Crossley's definition) can elucidate the relationships of tension and constant struggle, even among those who stand close to one another in the social space and in the field of activism.

Based on Crossley's use of habitus and field, Florea et al (2018) applied these concepts to analyse the movements and dynamics behind the housing struggles in Romania. The authors are also influenced by Fligstein and McAdams conception of Strategic Action Fields (SAF) and approach the study of the housing struggles from a relational perspective which considers the struggles movement as embedded within national and international economic dynamics, local and national politics, different action groups involved in the protests which sometimes cooperate, and sometimes compete. (Florea et al 2018, 714)

4.12 Strategic Action Fields

McAdam and Fligstein coined the term Strategic Action Fields (SAFs), as a theoretical construct that conceptualises the micro-macro connection and accounts for social stability and change (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 17). SAFs are defined as meso-level social orders that structure and build up the social space. The author compared them to “Russian Dolls” because each field is embedded within broader fields and made up of smaller fields. (Fligstein/ McAdam 2012, 17).

The SAF, as a social order that operates at the meso-level is bound together by a shared understanding of the purposes of the field, which, in the words of the authors, is not equivalent to say that these are consensual conditions. Actors in each field stand in positions of dominance or subordination (incumbents and challengers) and, from these positions, they interact with each other. Collective actors in SAFs are made up of SAFs themselves; the authors stress that under this perspective social movements can be seen as emergent social orders that are made up of social movement organisations as well as other less structured groups of actors, similar to McCarthy and Zald’s (1977) called social movement industries. Furthermore, the authors stress the contingent nature of SAFs as they stress:

under this conceptualisation, field membership is more dependent upon subjective standing than it is upon objective membership criteria; fields don’t have fixed boundaries and can sometimes operate on situational basis, since shifting actors can define new common/ opposed interests. (Mc Adam/ Fligstein, 2011 24).

Under this view, actors share a general understanding of the field and its possibilities, and they recognise other actors, their positions how they connect to their own interests. Lastly, actors in a field tend to regard it from their own perspective; dominant actors will be more likely to have self-serving attitudes and the challengers will tend to have more oppositional views. The authors define strategic actions as the attempts by social actors to create and sustain social worlds by securing the cooperation of others. (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 37).

One of the advancements that the authors identify in their theory with respect to Bourdieu’s, is the additional attention given to the spaces and relations between fields, and the conceptualisation of fields standing in relations of interdependence, independence and dependence. Secondly, the authors highlight their emphasis on collective action and their analysis of the development of strategies of cooperation and collective identities.

Fligstein and McAdam develop their argument by explaining, firstly, that their conceived homo sociologicus requires meaning at ground and develops meaning by acting with others. By this they don’t discard the role of instrumental rationality and they don’t underestimate the importance of strategy and the pursuit of power and accumulating resources, but they claim that this is, as well, embedded in meaning. (Fligstein/McAdam 2011, 61). Given that the authors stress that one of their main

advancements with respect to other theories, with respect to Bourdieusian theory, is the emphasis on collective action, collective action is conceptualised in detail. As a key element in their conceptualisation of collective action, the authors stress that social skill is a key trait that makes collective action possible; since it is defined as the ability to induce cooperation. They argue that this concept is rooted in symbolic interactionism and is the ability that actors have not only to read and understand the situation from their own perspective but also from the perspective of others and to be able to frame the situation in such ways to make cooperation relevant and significant for other actors as well. (Fligstein/ McAdam 2011, 62). Social skills are relevant since they are essential for the sustainment of action fields; the use of social skills by actors in order to promote collective action is what is necessary for the fields to continue to exist. The concept of social skill is, in a way, a bridging concept between the agent and the field; while the social skill is an asset of the individual, the ways in which she can make use of this is determined and limited by the field and its boundaries. In that sense, the theory of SAF and social skills argues that the possession of social skills (of each actor) and their position within the fields of action determine the possibilities and the frameworks within which actors can engage in cooperation and the collective construction of interest and material gain. At the core of this theory is a strong emphasis on collective action and the conception of human sociability is collective meaning making; according to the scholars, even material gain is constructed collectively and without group-action there is neither material gain, nor the possibility of creating material things. In that sense, they distance themselves from RAT; the RAT tradition argues that actors will always take “the free ride” if it is possible and thus, will cooperate only if there are selective incentives which are exclusively available to the actors who participate in collective efforts. To this Fligstein and McAdam respond that connection, recognition and belonging to a group are goals of their own (Fligstein/ McAdam 2011, 65). The idea of collective action as an end leads to them to claim the main challenge for skilled social actors is precisely to

Frame stories that help induce cooperation from people by appealing to their identity belief and interests while at the same time using the same stories to frame actions against various opponents. (Fligstein/McAdam 2011, 67).

The emphasis on social skills and collective action constitutes what these scholars named the micro-consideration of their theory, which is balanced by the conception of fields as meso-orders that operate within complex and intertwined networks of fields. As conceived by the authors, fields tend to have similar structures and the extent to which they are connected and dependent on other fields, will ultimately determine the extent to which they will be affected (or not) by the shocks and crises in other fields. The authors go on to distinguish between organisations and SAF. SAFs are

constructed social orders that define an arena within which a set of consensually defined and mutually attuned actors vie for advantage (Fligstein/McAdam 2011, 75)

whereas formal organisations are objective constructions with clear boundaries. In this theory, organisations might be key players within certain SAF and the interaction and hierarchies between

organisations might shape a specific SAF, or the IGU (internal governance units) of some SAF might be formal organisations but SAFs and organisations are not the same; SAFs can be made up of individuals and organisations, and organisations might function internally as a SAF.

The authors conceive the state as a set of strategic action fields:

state actors have advanced the claim that they alone can define or at least ratify the rules for the public strategic interaction in each geographic territory and that these results can be enforced by the use of physical violence. (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 82).

Still, this can be challenged by different actors and the state, according to them, engulfs different action fields some of which are in formation, others are stable, and others are in crisis. (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 82). To this extent, their view of the state is not too far from Bourdieu's, who conceives the state as a meta-field and exemplifies the ways in which the state can support or legitimise certain actors within a given field. Moreover, in Bourdieu's theory "Individuals and groups, organisations and institutions that hold dominant positions and capital in social space occupy the field of power." (Albright et al 2018, 28). In that sense, Fligstein and McAdam's depiction of the alliances between the dominant factions (incumbents) of the SAF and the state, and with incumbents in other related (connected) fields.

Furthermore, the authors argue that the state derives its legitimacy from the monopoly of the physical violence and by generating public goods and protection for the citizens. The complex group of SAFs that make up the state are interconnected with the non-state SAFs, they can mutually reinforce and depend on one another. The ways in which these fields interact can be varied; state fields can mediate and certify standards of legitimacy among the non-state SAFs, but also some of the actors in the non-state SAFs can raise demands on the state, claiming for more (or less) regulation, for new spaces of action, for more power to influence decision-making processes. Likewise, the support of some of the more powerful sectors of the SAFs, particularly the economic SAF, can be determinant for the stability of some of the state sectors and their ability to continue to reproduce the structures of the fields. The relationships between the state and non-state SAFs can be cooperative but also conflictive.

This perspective sees social movements as essentially groups that practice non-institutionalised politics and can become catalysts for state expansion, whether it is by creating pressure for the expansion of state protections and services, or by demanding the recognition of rights. In that sense, they recognise that in most cases, the states were created recognising only partial citizenships, given that social and political rights were only recognised for some of the actors thus others had to act from outside of the institutional spaces in order to get a seat on the table. Moreover, new governments emerging from social movements might shift large numbers of fields and might create new ones, but as the authors claim; the only way in which SAF are destroyed is if constituents disband or disappear.

Field formation relies on internal and external factors, such as economic, political, and cultural process as well as on skilled actors and their ability to bring some structure and some meaning into the chaos of an emerging field.

The emergence of fields is defined as more organisations are attempting to attain an end that are sufficiently similar that they are compelled to take each other's actions into account in their behaviour, then we can say that are observing attempts at field formation. (Fligstein and McAdam 2012, 179).

The initial conditions of the field usually secure the advantages of those who worked to shape it and of those with greater skills and resources. The advantage relies not only on the internalised norms and rules of procedure that become natural to all actors in the field, but also on the establishment of the internal governance units (IGU) which protect the interests of incumbents. In addition, incumbents often advantaged in their ability to connect with external fields that help support their position. Challengers can seek external support to improve their positions, or they can occupy the spaces not taken by the incumbents.

Fields are conceived as dynamic and embedded in networks of other fields. Hence, the authors also claim that SAFs can suffer exogenous shocks, like invasions by outside groups, changes in dominant fields or macro events. Moreover, fields can also be threatened by endogenous challenges. Despite the power inequalities between incumbents and challengers, change is inherent to SAF and elaborate on the different mechanisms to create this change from within. Challengers can build strong coalitions and a strong enough challenge will bring the state to intervene in favour of the challengers or at the least to promote a new order in the field. Stability is kept partly through the alliances, (explicit or tacit) between state fields and incumbents in each field and by the IGUs, which are associations that maintain order and stability by regulating, mediating and defining the boundaries of the SAF.

Similar to Bourdieu, the authors contend that more complex societies with growing economies, population and technology fuel the development of new social fields. As new fields emerge, the first settlement is at the point in which actors agree on what is going on in the field and express shared understandings and notions of who is part of the game. As one of the key elements in this theory is the emphasis on collective action, the authors stress that collective action can occur through cooperation or hierarchy; rather than opposing both, they argue that these categories exist in a continuum and that most SAF have elements of both.

The scholars recognise the challenges in empirically studying fields of action and most of these are precisely definition issues; about the borders, about the state of a given field and about the agents who belong therein. The authors give some general guidelines to solve these questions empirically, but they ultimately define their approach as realist and argue it can be adjusted to the specific needs and question of each given field.

Lastly, Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) see the novelty and advantage in their approach in the following aspects: the emphasis on the function of the social and the argument that collective meaning-making is an end in itself which actors' pursue, as they pursue instrumental and material advantage. Secondly, they see the concept of social skill as the ability to read people and situations and thus, be able to more effectively induce cooperation and collective meaning making. The consideration of the macro-environment and the connections between fields as well as the understanding of the state as a complex system of fields, the ideal typical orientations coalition and hierarchy, the conception of change as incremental dynamism and occasional ruptures. (see: Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 216).

4.13 SAFs and Radical Habitus

The works of Fligstein and McAdam, as well as Crossley offer significant advances to Bourdieu's field and habitus concepts, which can be particularly relevant for the study of activism and social movements. Fligstein and McAdam were influenced by social movement studies (among others) in the development of their theory. In that sense, their approach is cautious in considering the problem of stability and change and elaborate a definition in which these are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can coexist and are in fact part of the fields' dynamics. Their concept of "incremental change and rare occasional ruptures" helps conceptualise the situation of fields in which actors are aware of specific settings and inequalities that characterise the field. The authors challenge Bourdieu's concept of internalised hierarchies in that they consider this idea to be deterministic; rather they argue that dominated actors, as all actors for that matter, also have a stake in an established order and thus can also be resistant to change.

Perhaps the most important advancements that these perspectives bring to the present analysis is the strong relational emphasis; understanding fields in general (in the case of Fligstein and McAdam 2012) and activism and social movements in particular, as relational and deeply intertwined with other social fields. In that sense, Fligstein and McAdam offer an approach to the ways in which fields might be connected to one another and emphasise on these kinds of relations as an important factor when it comes to understanding field change. Similarly, Crossley (2003) sees social movements as fields within fields; this relational approach is explored empirically by Florea et al (2018) in their study of the housing market in Rumania; each field of action has actors and a logic of its own but is inserted within broader dynamics that can expand to local or even transnational fields.

The main contribution of Crossley's and Bourdieu's approach is the detailed construction of the agents' conditions, cognitive schemes, and dispositions under the concept of habitus. Crossley recognises that activists don't arrive to the social movements as blank slates, but that they bring their past and their own socialisation to them. In that sense, Bourdieu's detailed conceptualisation of the habitus offers an important advantage when it comes to explaining and analysing the conditions, mental schemes and

previous influences that the activists bring into a group. In that sense, this particular theoretical tool also contributes to a better understanding of the reasons behind the mobilisation and selection of new activists and the ways in which they react and see themselves with respect to their newly found groups. Much of the social movement literature (Corrigan-Brown 2020, Polleta/ Jasper 2001) highlights the importance of common identities and strong ties within the group as important factors determining people's permanence.

Despite the important advancements that the concepts of SAFs and radical habitus (Fligstein/ Mc Adam 2012, Crossley 2003) make to Bourdieu's theory (for the study of activism), Bourdieu's classical definitions of capital and symbolic power can provide valuable contributions to the study of activism. The material and symbolic dimensions of capital can clarify processes of negotiation and meaning making in social movements. Bourdieu's symbolic power can be a potent addition to this conceptualisation, considering that the symbolic order is not a replication of the material order, but it has to some extent some support in the material dimension, and it is about having the power of definition, the power to frame and to shape contents and ideas. In that sense, it is plausible to consider that even if fields, especially emerging fields, might have an identity and goals of their own, the positions that actors occupy, and their general capital can be influential in their starting position. Bourdieu sees the hierarchies within each field as homologous to the hierarchies in the social space and in overlapping fields, thus:

Homology of position among individuals and groups in different fields means that those that find themselves in dominated positions in the struggle for legitimation in one field tend also to find themselves in subordinated positions in other fields. (Swartz 1997, p. 130).

4.14 Further applications of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power

Despite the criticisms that Bourdieu's theory has received, in particular for being 'overly deterministic' and, thus, a theory more suitable to explain the reproduction of social structure than to describe social change (Girling 2004, Swartz, Crossley 2003, Fligstein/McAdam 2012) the concepts of habitus, field and social space remain highly influential in the social sciences. Moreover, the symbolic dimension of Bourdieu's theory, albeit with expansions and some criticism, has been considered an important explanatory concept when it comes to the reproduction and internalisation of hierarchies and inequalities. (Crossley 2003, 2004, 2005, Flora et al 2018, Swartz 1997, Girling 2004).

Hallet (2007) builds up on Bourdieu and Goffman and argues that symbolic power is about the power to define situations and the rules of action. It is supported by small rituals of deference and demeanour. In this conceptualisation, the author follows Bourdieu as he argues that being the recipient of these gestures of deference, is linked to certain forms of cultural capital which are characteristic of specific institutions. Besides this, the author adds, many of these dynamics are also mediated and shaped by gender-specific expectations. Hallet uses this conceptualisation of symbolic power to support his

ethnographic analysis of the power dynamics around the headmistress of a primary school. (see: Hallett 2007, 160). Hallett's work draws from symbolic interactionism and presents a dynamic in which the symbolic order and the dynamics of deference are partly mediated by material conditions, cultural capital (the headmistress is expected to have certain qualifications and experience in order to be recognised as apt for the job) but also by other more arbitrary traits such as gender, phenotypes, accents, places of residence and are supported not only by small rituals but also by everyday practices of conformity, labelling and acceptance.

In the specific case of the German context and the German social space, the studies related to symbolic power are often strongly related to the study of migration and the incorporation of migrants into German society. Scholars have studied the symbolic construction of the 'other' (as opposed to the German) the symbolic validation of languages, phenotypes, spaces occupied in the city, and ways of doing things (as in Arslan/Bosay 2019, Erel 2010)

Migrants from Turkey have long been constructed as the culturally and socially most distant Other (Finkelstein, 2006; Mandel, 2008). They are overrepresented in unskilled occupations in industry and services as well as among the unemployed. Despite the increasing educational success of second-generation migrants, they still experience difficulty accessing skilled jobs (Granato, 2006). One of the few sectors where migrants have been able to access skilled employment is in social and educational jobs as cultural 'mediators' (Lutz, 1991), specifically catering to a migrant client group. (Erel 2010, 642)

Based on the analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with Turkish and Kurdish women who migrated to the UK and Germany, Erel (2010) discusses difficulties they experience when trying to gain recognition for their cultural capital in the new labour market; one of the main realisations is that the capital accumulated in their countries of origin is not valued (or at least not equally valued) by the British and German employers. Based on her interviews and a thorough review of the literature available, the author identifies two obstacles that migrants face when working in contexts different to those where they acquired their qualifications. Firstly, they face the challenge of getting the official recognition for the qualifications obtained abroad. Secondly, they are confronted by the lack of experience in the local context or "local capital". Erel (2010) argues, nonetheless, that those who have a "universalised Western cultural capital" which is rapidly accepted and recognised as valid in different contexts, can easily adapt and work in most contexts, disregarding the lack of local capital.

Arslan and Bosay (2019) applied the concept of symbolic order and symbolic power to study the persistent inequalities in the German education system, and how the differences are not only between volumes of capital but basically between forms of capital which are valued differently by the institutional context. The researchers resort to Bourdieu's conceptual toolbox to investigate the of second-generation migrants in the access and enrolment in education; how is their bi-cultural experience valued by the education system, how are migrant children navigating the complex German school system.

Girling (2004) discusses the specific relevance of symbolic capital and symbolic violence in the context of social movements; the author recognises that the concept of symbolic power can, indeed, imply a conception of a practically autonomic reproduction of social inequalities, and argues that in the case of feminism and male domination, an orthodox interpretation of Bourdieu's sociology can make the conception of abeyant structures in social movements difficult to explain. Because of this, Girling opts for an expanded understanding of symbolic capital in the context of social movements in which he considers the option of an "inverted symbolic capital" wherein the dominated factions can also exercise resistance and attempt to frame the social space.

4.15 Political participation and social movements

4.15.1 Political Participation

Political participation sounds like a straight-forward common-sense concept, yet defining it proves complex given that definitions can change according to context, political culture and can ultimately shape the kind of results obtained (Van Deth 2014, Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019). On the contested nature of political participation, Van Deth (2014) contends:

As Verba *et al.* pointed out in 1978, there is of course no 'true' definition of political participation, but rather definitions have to be appropriately adopted so as to suit the research context. This definition is dependent upon the scholar's assessment of the purpose of political participation: is the purpose to change or influence government outcomes (Verba *et al.*, 1978; Parry *et al.*, 1992; Pattie *et al.*, 2004; Whiteley, 2012), to establish societal goals (Verba and Nie, 1972), to allocate social values (Easton, 1965), to change and/or establish the allocation of public goods (Booth and Seligson, 1978) or to engage in a process of managing co-existence with other individuals (Milbrath, 1965)? Given the wide range of arguments outlining the purpose of political participation, it is difficult to find a consensus on how political participation should be defined and quantified. (Fox 2014, 496 as cited by Van Deth 2014, 350)

Van Deth (2014) raises the issue of having a working definition of political participation that expands the conventional fixation with partisanship, electoral participation, and unionism to include the new and diverse repertoires of action. Still, the author stresses the importance of avoiding purely subjectivist conceptions that could frame almost all action or sentiments as political action (Van Deth 2014, 350). Likewise, in her comprehensive summary of the participation literature, Pickard (2019) also stresses the proliferation of diverging definitions and approaches to political participation and stresses that they are "time and beholder sensitive" (Pickard 2019, 57). Furthermore, Pickard highlights the significant interdisciplinary differences when it comes to the definitions and methodologies preferred to study participation, arguing that political scientists have tended to privilege structural approaches and quantitative methods (mostly concerned with electoral turnout, partisan support, and unionism) and sociology has more closely engaged with qualitative methods and more interpretative approaches (Pickard, 2019, 58)

Much of the literature about participation cite Almond/ Verba (1963), Norris (2002) and Putnam (2000) as seminal works when it comes to the study of political participation (see: Pickard 2019, Van Heth 2014, Spanning 2008, Dalton 2017). Albeit with significant caveats, these works focus on legal, institutionalised mechanisms of participation, which concentrate on action directed at either influencing the direction of government or influencing the allocation of public goods (Pickard 2019, 81); voting, partisan membership, communal membership and action, electoral campaigning. Further studies expanded the definition of political participation to include protest activities; In their seminal work *Political Action* Kasse et al (1979) go “beyond behavioural aspects of participation to explore attitudinal ones”, the scholars draw from previous characterisations of political participation (they cite Verba/ Nie 1972) to construct the concept of conventional participation and add the category unconventional participation to include more defiant repertoires of action, like protesting and petitioning (see: Kaase et al 1980, Pickard 2019). Some of the later works have further expanded the notion of unconventional participation and given it a more important role in the study of participation (Pickard 2019, Henn/ Sloam 2014, Norris 2002)

“In this way, the repertoire of political participation went beyond voting, party membership, electioneering and standing for political office (sustaining the polity status quo) towards a greater propensity for direct action encompassing protest and civil disobedience (challenging the polity status quo).” (Pickard 2019, 58)

Regarding non-conventional participation, scholars have underlined the differentiated targets of their political action, as well as the different types and intensity of actions, and the changing intensity in participant’s commitment. Following Inglehart’s thesis that the expansion in education and the increased living standards that took place in Western societies after WWII, led to a shift from materialistic to post materialistic values, Kaase et al argue that educated young people became engaged in these forms of politics, and that these unconventional repertoires and concerns, came to supplement the conventional repertoires of action. (Kaase et al 1979, 28)

Considering the diverse ways in which participation has been defined and the implications for research, Van Deth (2014) mentions four main traits that seem to be a common denominator to most definitions of political participation; first, it must involve action, hence interest or concern alone cannot be considered participation. Second, it is exercised by people acting in their conditions of citizens (thus it cannot include the actions of elected politicians), third, it must be voluntary, and last “it deals with government, politics or the state in a broad sense of the words” (Van Deth 2014, 53). Pipa Norris (2002, 16 as cited by Van Deth 2014, 55) also argued for the need to expand the concept of political participation to include activities that seek ‘... to impact civil society, or which attempt to alter systematic patterns of social behaviour’.

Van Deth (2014) expands his review of the definitions of political participation and proposes four main categories; a *minimalist* category which includes voluntary activities carried out by citizens dealing with government and/ or politics and which are located in the realm of the state. A second category, includes voluntary activities conducted by citizens that are outside the spaces of state/ government but that target state and governmental actors. Borrowing Tilly's concept (Tilly/ Tarrow 2015), Van Deth (2014) names these forms of participation contentious politics. The third category includes activities conducted by amateurs that are neither part of the political/ state sphere nor do they target these directly, but that attempt to generate solutions for community and social problems, an example are grass-roots groups and citizens committees. Lastly, the author includes a category of activities (again, carried out by amateurs, not professional politicians) that are outside the sphere of state, do not target state actors and are not necessarily political, but serve to express a political opinion; here the author gives the example of people buying specific brands or avoiding specific products because of a specific concern with the product's/ company's social or environmental impact.

Scholars have thus considered political participation highly relevant for any political system, but particularly for democratic systems, either to reinforce and reproduce political structures or as a mechanism to "keep checks" on the political elites (Spannring et al 2008, 5).

4.15.2 Mechanisms and Approaches

The working definition and the approach taken to study political participation can significantly affect the kind of results obtained (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019); hence scholars who have focused on the more conventional expressions of political participation, seem to agree with Putnam's (2000) dire vision that participation is drastically falling. Putnam's (2000) theory parts from a conventional institutional idea of participation; voting, contacting politicians, joining political parties, labour unions or voluntary associations. From this perspective, Putnam's (2000) argues that participation is in decline, that the younger generations are less willing to participate than the older cohorts, partly due to the process of modernisation which loosens traditional ties. Considering the crucial role that most scholars attribute to participation in the sustainment of any political system (Hooghe/ Winkelfield 2008, Mill 2008), but even more for the maintenance of democratic system, Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) stresses the risks that youthful apathy poses for democracy and social trust (Spannring et al 2008). While Putnam's study was focused on the US American context, other works have also expanded this thesis to the European context arguing that European youth is moving away from politics and from conventional instances of associations like communal associations, political parties or trade unions (see: Spannring et al 2008, 13). Conversely, those scholars who adopt broader definitions of participation, to include non-electoral and issue-oriented actions which are not necessarily directly targeting governments or policy makers have a less pessimistic perspective (Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019, Henn/Sloam 2017). This strand of research

cites examples of unconventional and bottom-up instances of participation in which young people are currently getting involved (Spannring et al 2008, Henn/ Sloam 2017, Norris 2002, Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017). In this line, the division between conventional and unconventional mechanisms of participation has been questioned by scholars who argue that the so-called unconventional mechanisms like peaceful protesting and petitioning have become increasingly institutionalised and part of the regular repertoires of political action in current societies. This is the argument of those who consider that we live in a “social movement society” (Meyer/ Tarrow 1997, Earl 2017, Pickard 2019). The same controversy applies to new participation mechanisms, such as cyber activism and boycotting products or so-called consumer politics.

The shift from institutional political activity to other forms of participation has been attributed to disappointment with the political elites and the traditional political processes (Spannring et al 2008, Earl et al 2017) as well as changing norms and understandings of what citizenship and democracy mean (Earl et al 2017, Manning 2010). More recently, scholars have studied issue-based engagement, solidary economy projects, blogging, cyber-activism, do-it-ourselves initiatives (DOI) (Pickard 2019, Henn/Sloam 2017, Spannring 2008, Dalton 2017); all of which include actions that neither engage in electoral debates, nor do they target politicians nor decision-makers directly, but rather appeal to the general public in order to promote societal change. Furthermore, scholars have explored the reasoning, the motivations and the concrete routines involved in these initiatives, as well as the significance of those deliberately avoiding the conventional institutionalised mechanisms of participation (Spannring 2008, Pickard 2019, Henn/ Sloam 2017). In particular, conscious consumerism or boycotting (Pickard 2019) and on cyber activism have opened further scholarly discussions regarding the directions and the future of youth participation (Ilia 2003, Valenzuela et al 2012, 2014, Treré 2015). Besides exploring the incidence of these new and creative forms of participation and expression, social scientists have also devoted significant attention to studying youth radicalisation; right/ left-wing extremism, Islamic extremism, etc (Uba/Bosi 2022, Gómez/Morales 2016, Mierina 2018)

Concerning the gap between those who adhere to the “apathetic thesis” and those closer to the optimistic view, Farthing (2010) argues that both angles are important given that both processes, engagement and disengagement, are taking place simultaneously in Western democracies and that both of them have relevance for democracy; similar to this, (Spannring 2008, 70) contends that non-voters often see abstention as a political statement in itself, if they don’t feel compelled by any of the candidates available. Hence abstention, or deliberate nonparticipation can, in its own way, be a political statement. Lastly, some scholars (Dalton 2017, Amnâ/Ekman’s 2014, Schlozman et al. 2010) have suggested that the expansion in participation, made possible by the expansion in the repertoires of action, needs to be regarded with caution given that it has also meant an increased inequality in terms of who actually participates; Dalton (2017) names this the participation gap, and argues that it is the middle-class educated youth who is making use of the opportunities of participation, while others are remaining

excluded. The author considers that this obeys, at least partially, to a higher demand for resources (specially knowledge) posed by these new 'expressive and personalised' mechanism of action. At this point, Dalton partially echoes Parkin's (1968) seminal work on the British Anti-Nuclear Committee, a well-known study that provided empirical evidence suggesting that these 'new social movements' were heavily dominated by people from the middle classes and in particular, people who were already connected within the community.

4.15.3 Explaining and understanding participation

Albeit with different and evolving notions of participation (as the summary above shows), participation studies have sought to explain who participates, under what circumstances why and how. Considering that participation (whether institutionalised or non-institutionalised, sustained, or occasional) has a collective and individual cost (Bäck et al 2011), and that chances of success are usually relatively low, these questions appear all the more relevant.

That participation has a cost is not exactly controversial, since scholars agree that it requires time, efforts, know-how and sometimes money to participate (see: Bäck et al 2011, McAdam 1988, Dalton 2017). Considering that participation can (and has) be studied from different interpretations and theoretical assumptions, the costs attached to participating are also different since they depend on the kind of activity (occasional or permanent, legal or illegal, network-dependent or individual, etc.) the intensity of the engagement, and the resources available to those who participate (Bäck et al 2011). The willingness to take on the costs and participate, even if the chances of (at least immediate) success are relatively low is what scholars have named "the participation paradox" (Bäck et al 2011, Stürmer/Bernd 2015). Even more, the perception that the political objectives could be reached, and thus collective benefits might be reaped without one's personal contribution poses another important question in the studies of participation; the free-rider dilemma.

Considering the consensus around the ideas that participation has a cost, that costs are different depending on the kind of participation and that these costs are also experienced differently by people with different resources and biographies, it is unsurprising that the literature shows that willingness to participate is higher than actual participation (Gaiser et al 2010) and that voting and other occasional forms of participation are more frequent than sustained participation (ibid.).

Considering participation in a broad sense (ie. electoral participation, protest activity, petitioning, boycotting, membership in political parties, unions, NSMs, squats) the literature has attempted to offer both, structural as well as agent-centred explanations as to why do people decide to participate politically, or better yet why are some people more prone than others to participate politically. The

structural approaches, attempt at providing overarching system-dependent explanations for the participation patterns; political culture, organisational networks and tradition has been an important explicatory frame when it comes to accounting for electoral participation (Almond/ Verba 1963, Jenkins et al 2008, Pickard 2019 McAdam 1988, McAdam 1992), but also for the so-called unconventional instances of participation (McAdam 1988, 1992). Likewise, the existence of a varied and consolidated civil society has also been considered when it comes to explaining engagement with organisations (Gaiser et al 2010). In the specific case of more contentious forms of participation, like protest behaviour, different structural factors have been mentioned, financial well-being, democratic stability, peaceful transitions of power. Agent-centred analyses and explanations have explored rational calculation of costs and benefits (RAT) but also the role of networks and identities. Some of the RAT-centred analyses focus on agents' acting according to what they perceive are the socially desirable actions (Bäck et al 2011, 2019, Baumeister/ Leary 1995). These analyses make a differentiation between collective and selective incentives, wherein the former include those incentives that could be obtained for the community from the political action (the election of a political party, the revision of specific laws and regulations, etc.) and the latter include the benefits that are only available to the people who participate (Bäck et al 2011, Bäck/ Bäck 2015, Bäck et al 2019). The selective incentives include the satisfaction of complying with social norms (usually connected to electoral participation) the feeling of acceptance by peers by engaging in what is perceived as socially desirable behaviour, the satisfaction of being able to express their own political opinions within a context of like-minded people and, lastly, an entertainment value, given that many people have fun in their political action. (Opp/ Stürmer 2009).

When it comes to explaining electoral participation, scholars often cite Almond and Verba (1963) as they contend that local political cultures influence the ways in which people participate, and that people mostly conform to the dominant social norms when it comes to participation (Bäck et al 2011, Pickard 2019). Additionally, further studies have provided evidence of the relevance of political and cohort socialisation in explaining and understanding patterns of political participation (Grasso 2017, 2018, Pickard 2019)

Experimental and survey studies in the field of psychology have provided evidence about the incidence of personality types and rejection sensitivity in young people's willingness to participate in protests (Bäck et al 2015) Parting from the idea that the need for acceptance and belonging are essential human needs (Baumeister/ Leary 2005) and based on previous research about conformity and the malleability of young people's opinions and identities, these studies show evidence that those people who are most sensitive to rejection are more likely to participate if they perceive this as the socially desirable thing to do (see: Bäck et al 2019)

Further explanations have stressed the resource availability as an explanation and precondition for participation (McAdam 1988) and that participation (or non-participation) will depend on the resources

available and the objective (actual costs in terms of time, money, efforts, know-how) and the subjective (how bearable these costs are for a specific individual, depending on the resources available to them) costs (Bäck et al 2011). Scholars have provided evidence that suggests that parental influence is still a great predictor when it comes to political participation and attitudes (Henn/ Sloam 2017).

Additionally, participation studies have gathered evidence suggesting that (generally speaking) men are more likely to participate than women, middle classes participate more than working classes, people with higher levels of education are more active than people with lower levels of education (Spanning et al 2008, Earl et al 2017, Dalton 2017, Parkin 1968). The most salient explanations for these differences are that middle classes more often possess the cultural capital needed for political participation, as well as the financial stability to allow for free time to participate. When it comes to the 'gender gap' in political participation, some of the more frequent explanations have stressed access to resources; that (on average) women are still earning less than men, taking over more of the household work (including childcare) but also some cultural factors, like women are often less confident than men when it comes to entering political discussions or running for public office. (Pfanzelt/ Spies 2019).

4.15.4 Social Movements

The study of social movements gained significant salience among social science scholars after the growth in social movement activity experienced by several societies during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Della Porta and Diani (2006) the growth in number and the changes in orientation of social movements, made scholars expand their frames. The conscientious study of social movements parts from the need to provide explanatory frameworks to the growing protests and contentious networks in the 1960s and 1970s (Della Porta/Diani 2006). Most social movement scholars agree that, since then, many of the so-called new social movements (NSM) have become regular actors in the political landscapes in most European nations (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Meyer/Tarrow 1996) and have opened the way for the development of further issue-based movements and networks. In this social movement society several of these social movements have formalised and developed some of form of structure, they have accumulated know-know, refined their repertoires of action, and established a network; those social movements that develop formal structures and organisational forms have been called social movement organisations (SMOs) (Davis et al 2005, Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017). Good examples of this are the organisations that developed from the environmental and anti- nuclear movement. In that sense, scholars stress the difference between the social movement itself (ie., the environmental movement) and the specific SMOs (*Greenpeace*, WWF, Nabu, etc.) In that sense, it is worth stressing that the literature is not unanimous when it comes to the classification of political parties as SMOs (see Davis et al 2005) and thus some of the literature only consider the Green parties and some of the more radical parties that started as social movements as actual SMOs.

In general terms, much of the social movement studies have either tended towards the structural aspects, like access to resources (or resource mobilisation theory, RMT, see: Mc McCarthy/Zald 1977) and political opportunity structures (POS) or have had a “cultural” approach to social movements, studying the importance of emotions, collective identities, frames of cognition (Polleta/Jasper 2001, Ruiz-Junco 2001, Snow 2001, 20013). The RMT approaches argue that social movements need financial resources but also sufficient contacts, time, and know-how to be able to mobilise and attain their goals. In this view, movements will succeed depending on whether they have efficient leadership and can mobilise the necessary resources. Moreover, studies centred on Political Opportunity Structures (POS) contend that it is the ability to seize opportunities given by contextual situation what will ultimately yield success; these opportunities often include the openness for dissent, struggles among the elites, economic stability, increased political awareness, organisational strength.

From agent perspective, RMT has focused on the issues of resources, such as having personal resources that enable participation and being exposed to networks of participation. The research on resources has stressed that these include material resources (financial stability and disposable income) time (biographic availability) (Earl et al 2017). Moreover, resources also include the possession of cultural capital to be able to engage in political discussions and to be able to articulate political grievances as such; much of the research confirms that people with higher levels of education are more prone to participate politically (Parkin 1968) to donate to charity and to engage in social and political associations and groups (Dalton 2017, Parkin 1968) Lastly, social capital has also been considered of paramount importance when it comes to people not only entering but also sustaining participation.

Conversely, scholars taking the cultural approach to the study of social movements have stressed the importance of having shared identities and collective rituals in the strengthening of internal bonds and in incentivising mobilisation (Polletta/ Jasper 2001, Crossley 2003, 2004, Snow 2001, 2013) on the importance of emotions in the context of political action (Goodwin et al 2009) and the important of framing and shared narratives in social movements (Snow 2013, Klandermans et al 2008).

4.15.5 Sustained participation

While the concept of participation includes both, the occasional act (voting, petitioning, supporting demonstrations, conscious consumerism) as well as sustained engagement, this study deals specifically with activists who are engaged in sustained participation.

As with most social problems, the question of why some of the people who engage politically quickly abandon their commitment whereas others remain engaged over time doesn't seem to have simple answers (Bunnage 2014, Corrigan-Brown 2012, Klandermans/Staggenborg 2002, Fillieule/Neveu

2019). Scholars have dealt with this question using qualitative (Passy/Giugni 2000, Bosi 2012, Corrigan-Brown 2020) as well as quantitative approaches (Corrigan-Brown 2012) or mixed-methods (Nepstad 2004). Retention of members is essential for the survival and development of social movements and social movement organisations (Bunnage 2014) and it has consequences for both, the SMOs and the activists themselves (Passy/ Giugni 2000, McAdam 1989). Moreover, persistence in political engagement is determined by personal (agents), organisational and contextual processes (Bunnage 2014, Corrigan-Brown 2012b, Fillieule 2010).

In her overview of the literature available on the topic of activist retention, Bunnage (2014) distinguishes some of the main categories; individual, organisational, and contextual factors in determining activist retention. For analytical purposes, these factors are presented separately and have often been studied separately even though they are often intertwined with each other. Individual factors include availability of resources, biographic availability, which means not having too many job or family commitments that might deter activism, socio-political orientation, having a perception of efficacy when it comes to the goals and the strategies of the organisation. Despite the mentioned emphasis on mobilisation and high-profile activists (Corrigan-Brown 2012, 2020, Fillieule 2010) the analysis of individual factors determining the persistence in political engagement has yielded studies that explore the factors that lead people to remain or leave, and also explain the developments of engagement and disengagement; that is, the study of trajectories or activist careers. (ibid.et).

The trajectories that militants follow are not only shaped by the individuals' biographies but also by the type of organisation they join, and the kind of structure these organisations have and whether or not these are helpful in keeping people engaged. (Corrigan-Brown 2020, 16). Scholars who have approached organisational factors have studied the recruitment mechanisms and how these can foster or deter the engagement of specific sub-groups (McAdam 1992), the hierarchic structures (Corrigan-Brown 2020), the issue scope (ibid.) and the intensity of social interaction (ibid.). The recruitment process of the Freedom Summer is used as an example of this (see: Fillieule 2010) given the preference for male and upper-class participants. (Fillieule 2010, McAdam 1992). Other organisational factors include the strategic ability to keep the existing members engaged. Some of the strategies and mechanisms include collective rituals and spaces of exchange in which the shared beliefs can be confirmed (Goodwin et al 2009), this fosters the development of strong ties, positive emotional connections, and shared identities (Goodwin/ Jasper 2015) which create internal cohesion and reduce the chances of defection. Some of the literature suggests that organisations with more horizontal structures are more likely to retain their members, as well as those organisations that devote resources in helping members release stress, connect with others, and work through the difficult stages in their activism or at the times when the cost of the engagement becomes higher (Corrigan-Brown 2020).

From an interactionist perspective, Fillieule (2010) mentions the internal harmony of the organisation, as well as the continued relevance and effectiveness of the group (or at least a shared belief therein) as factors that can create incentives to stay. At the contextual level the author argues that the generalised perception of a given group, or a specific cause can alter the way in which activists perceive themselves, their activism and thus, the cost that remaining active has for them. The author gives the example of AIDS activism during the 1980s and 1990s; in the earlier days, the strong stigmatisation of AIDS and of the activists made it very difficult for those who were not directly affected to openly engage in this kind of activism, whereas in the 1990s the increased acceptance made it somewhat easier for others to openly engage.

Social factors include membership in any form of civil society organisation, membership in and connection with citizens' networks, but also 'social factors' also refer to the strength of the intra-organisational ties and the possibility to adopt a role and a function within the organisation. When it comes to social networks, the picture remains slightly disputed. Even though much of the literature has studied the relevance of social networks for activism (Diani 2004) and the importance of strong intra-organisational networks have been stressed by several scholars working on the subject, intense personal networks and affectional ties can also yield undesirable results. Goodwin and Jasper (2015) argued that while personal affinity and strong personal networks can strengthen an organisation and prevent defection, it can also increase the potential for conflict, if personal problems permeate the organisational dynamic.

4.15.6 The agents' perspective: trajectories and reasons to remain engaged

Some of the scholars who have studied sustained engagement have stressed the importance of availability, values, collective identity, connection between the engagement and the personal life (harmonisation of life spheres) (see: Passy/Giugni 2000, Downtown/Wher 1998, Corrigall-Brown 2012, Goodwin et al 2009). Based on a qualitative study of activists involved in the US pacifist movement, Downtown/Wehr (1998) argue that one of the key factors in determining people's persistent commitment to a social movement or organisation is availability. The authors distinguish between situational and attitudinal availability, arguing that situational availability refers to the actual (given) life circumstances that make it possible (or not) for people to mobilise and become engaged with specific movements. In that sense, they quote McAdam's Freedom Summer study (1988) in which the authors show evidence that at the time of mobilisation, most activists are usually unmarried, not working full time, and had no children. Consequently, the authors argue that at the time of mobilisations, activists are often free from many obligations, therefore have the time and the energy to get involved. The second form of availability, attitudinal availability, refers to the ability to make free time and gain the resources

needed for a political engagement and this relies strongly on an already existent belief in the relevance of the cause and of the engagement. In the specific case of the pacifist movement, Downtown and Wehr (1998) argue that a socialisation favourable to pacifism and to helping others made activists more prone to having this attitudinal availability which means not only that they recognise the importance of this cause and of this engagement, but also that they are willing to shape their lives in a way that allows them to have time for engaging in causes they consider relevant and to actively seek to gain the necessary know-how to get involved.

Albeit with different methodologies and approaches, Bunnage's (2014) overview suggests that the studies have predominantly focused on understanding the incidence of factors like socio-political positions, biographical changes (or biographic availability), resources, embeddedness in civil society networks. The author summarises the different approaches to the concept of retention or sustained participation as follows:

Retention is difficult to define partly because activists' political participation can vary over time. In response to this, scholars refer to ongoing participation in different ways. Klandermans (1994, 1997) identifies three phases of attitudinal and behavioural engagement: initial, sustained, and disengagement. Corrigan-Brown (2012) adds detail to this model by considering activists' "trajectories" more broadly and classifying and discussing four potential stages: complete disengagement, transfer (whereby a person remains involved in activism on the same issue but in a different location), abeyance (a period of disengagement with subsequent re-engagement), and persistence. By using the notion of "activist career," Fillieule (2010) also focuses on distinct and fluctuating methods of engagement over time. (Bunnage 2014, 439)"

Expanding on Klandermans (1997) concepts of activist trajectories (initial, persistent, and disengaged activists) Corrigan-Brown (2012) suggests including the abeyance, as a further form of activist trajectory. The author argues that Klandermans persistent activist (which she considers is closer to the highly engaged activists described by Doug McAdam in his seminal work *Freedom Summer*) is an unusually committed individual who experiences unusually profound consequences to their activism (see: Corrigan-Brown 2012, 229). The author parts from a working definition based on three ideal-typical trajectories of activism; persistent, disengaged, and abeyant. The latter describes those activists who follow non-linear patterns of engagement; those who mobilise, disengage temporarily, switch organisations etc. Based on Taylor's (1989) concept of abeyance social movement structures, Corrigan-Brown (2020) argues that these intermittent activists can draw from their incorporated know-how and networks in order to become active again. The author argues that this kind of activist trajectory is more common than the highly engaged trajectories of the freedom summer activists.

In her study *From the Balconies to the Barricades* Corrigan-Brown (2012) suggests that abeyance and disengagement account for at least 50% of the trajectories of participants and this is confirmed in the results of her book "activist trajectories". Following much of the existing social science literature about participation, the author explores socio-political orientation, biographic availability, resources,

membership in civil society organisations as potential causes for change or persistence in activist trajectories.

In her review, Corrigan-Brown (2012) states that most of the previous studies have yielded mixed results when it comes to the effects of marriage, childrearing, etc. the literature available attributes these mixed results to the fact that different kinds of activism imply different costs and different risks and opportunities, and hence some might be more/ less compatible with family life. The same is the case for full-time employment; while some of the literature argues that those free from full-time employment are more likely to engage, the effects on sustained activism are not so clear-cut. In particular, the author argues, because full-time employment enables access to financial resources and networks, some of the necessary conditions for activism. Moreover, some forms of activism might be encouraged by employment, like unionism.

Inevitably, many of the studies explore the extent to which the interaction between the 'activist career' and the everyday life continues to work. In her book *Activist Trajectories* Corrigan-Brown (2020) presents results exploring and theorising about long-term activism. The author stresses that while much of the research focuses on the highly engaged and very salient faces of activism, the reality is that most activists follow non-linear paths, during which they switch organisations, reduce their engagement, retreat for time, and then eventually re-active their know-how and networks and become active again. (Corrigan-Brown 2020, 14)

Passy and Giugni's (2000) phenomenological study of activist permanence emphasises the interplay between the person's "spheres of life" namely, work, family, leisure, activism and presents qualitative data suggesting that maintaining balance and harmony between life spheres was an important condition for long time activists. The authors argue that besides ideological commitment, resource availability and embeddedness in networks, scholars need to consider the relevance of the meanings given not only to the activism, the group, and the causes. In that vein, they argue that the importance of the networks is not only to facilitate access, but to be engaged in communities in which the meaning of activism and of the cause is constantly reinforced (Passy/Giugni 2000, 121).

The concept of deviant careers, and the successive stages that Becker describes as part of becoming a marijuana user are an inspiration to other researchers who investigate the development of an activist career; from the initial stages, learning the techniques and the avatars of the activity, but also the contingencies, interruptions, and interaction with the everyday life (see: Fillieuele 2010). Becker's study presents an approximation to the marijuana use and the how this use changes depending on the changes at the persona level. Becker offers an approach to the learning and incorporating not only of the activities per se but ultimately of the meanings attached to it as socially constructed and socially reinforced.

Most of the researchers who have studied long-term participation or sustained activism seem to agree that being politically active in the long term, has consequences for the person's biography. One of the best known and widely discussed example is McAdam's (1989) study about the biographical consequences that participation in the *Freedom Summer* had on activists. The author used survey data to compare the life trajectories and political attitudes of former participants of the *Freedom Summer* with the information of those who, despite being selected to the project, didn't participate.

Fillieule and Neveu's (2019) compilation of articles about the effects of long-term engagement stresses the relevance of understanding long-term engagement as something that generates and reproduces political socialisation and to fully understand the biographical and personal consequences of long-term engagement. In this vein, the authors stress the importance of understanding political socialisation not so much as a process that starts and finishes during the early years of socialisation, but to also devote some attention to adult political socialisation and the interaction processes through which adults can continue socialising one another and shaping each other's views and frames of perception. Fillieule and Neveu (2019), as well as Crossley (2003, 2004) recognise the potential contribution of symbolic interactionism to the study of social movements; considering them spaces of constant interaction and permanent top-down but also peer to peer political socialisation, movements shape activists as much as activists shape social movements:

“Actually, rare are the case studies perceiving social movements, as Goffman did with total institutions, as spaces of interaction having a substantial power of socialization (Flesher Flominaya, 2010; Beckwith, 2016 for notable exceptions). Nonetheless, movements do not simply produce repertoires and impacts on policies and politics. They also produce (or fail to produce) activists. Borrowing this phrase from the Eliasian sociology, they produce lasting changes in the “We-I balance” of part of their members, injecting in the social world activists with strong dispositions for collective action and the construction of claims and causes, entrepreneurs of social changes.” (Fillieule/ Neveu 2019)

From this perspective, the authors stress the role of social movements and social movement organisations in promoting political events but also in creating activists, through the sustained interaction and the internal mechanisms of socialisation. Furthermore, they suggest that the effects of being politically engaged go well beyond the realm of political opinion and political socialisation given that the organisations have secondary socialisation effects which can ultimately affect other instances of a person's life. In that sense, the authors come closer to the realm of habitus; they part from a situation of sustained activism, in which actors engage with a group for an extended period of time. At the core of the argument lies the assumption that this engagement is changing more than just the political views, but it is also helping shape other aspects of the activists' lives. This conception of organisations as symbolic spaces of sustained socialisation leads the authors to discuss the existing approaches to adult socialisation, the persistent model, the lifelong openness model and the impressionable years model. (Fillieule/ Neveu 2019). The persistence model which alleges that people undergo their political socialisation during their early years and tend to hold on to their beliefs and orientations as they age.

Conversely, the lifelong openness model, argues that dispositions can be altered through life and that age is ultimately irrelevant in these socialisation processes. (ibid. 2019, 7). From the lifelong openness model, the authors highlight the importance of considering life-cycle transitions and turning points and how they also shape political attitudes and disposition to become (or not engaged). The authors consider that these turning points in a person's life can affect their political attitudes in three main aspects; in that they crystallise personal identities, through the assumption of new roles and in the ways, they handle the demands of adulthood (ibid., 8).

The impressionable years model which poses the argument that political socialisation can be a life-long process but during adolescence and early adulthood, people are more open to new impressions and experience politics as a "fresh encounter" (ibid. 9 citing Mannheim 1936). Fillieuele and Neveu present an understanding of political socialisation that assumes that this is a lifetime process and that people who become mobilised continue being socialised long after their early mobilisation. Still, they argue, the years of adolescence and early adulthood mark a phase during which people are more malleable and more open to other influences given that this is also a period marked by the search of personal and social identities. They argue that this trend can also be understood in the light of political parties and movements drifting apart and the consolidation of movements and contention as a political space on its own. (ibid. 9)

The first model has an undeniable deterministic trend, as the second has an overly constructivist orientation. The impressionable years model comes closer to the concept of "producing activists" through sustained participation that the authors are discussing. Likewise, this idea is present in Crossley's radical habitus in that he acknowledges that activists are shaped and made into such through sustained interaction with the group, but also that they don't arrive to the groups as blank slates and that the socialisation they have had so far, will strongly shape the ways in which they engage and interact with the group.

Some of the research on the long-term effects of activism identified by the participation literature are that people tend to remain more interested in and better informed about politics than their counterparts, that they tend often remain engaged in civic or political organisations, and often opt for less-paying jobs in the help professions, marry later or are more likely to get divorced (McAdam 1989). Still, this research mostly applies to high-intensity and high-risk activism in which it is frequent that groups demand a lot of time and loyalty from their participants and imply a lot of direct interaction (Bosi 2012, Bosi/ Della Porta 2013). Corrigall-Brown (2020) expected the trends to be somewhat different for some of the less intense and less risky forms of engagement.

Corrigall-Brown (2020) explores the more discontinuous and non-linear trajectories of political engagement. The author analyses transfer and argues, there are different reasons why people transfer:

either the organisation changes and thus, people can no longer find an ideological connection with the organisational goals, or the individual experiences significant changes in their biography or interests, or the context changes. In addition, Corrigan-Brown's (2012b) model of trajectory participation explores participation from the moment of mobilisation into the following stages, based on the four categories of trajectories. According to the scholar, this model

Outlines how individuals' personal characteristics lead them to participate in contentious politics and, once involved, how they engaged within a relational and organisational context. This context shapes the identities and social ties that individuals develop in the course of engagement which lead them to follow different trajectories in the course of participation (Corrigan-Brown 2020, 20)

The scholar considers four main factors that enable people to become engaged politically: ideology, resources, availability, and social networks. She also stresses that participation is not experienced the same way by people who attend occasional meetings, have no friends in the organisation and have no strong identity connections with the group, as by those who are constantly involved both in terms of the number of hours devoted but also in terms of the intensity and the relevance of the bonds they have within the organisation. (ibid. 21)

Despite significant differences presented by the theoretical and empirical approaches to the question of participation, the literature seems to suggest a few discernible ideas, the first and most salient one being that participation has costs hence engaging in it is a paradox and, second, that no single factor seems to be determinant enough to be, by itself, sufficient to explain participation. Ideology is a "necessary but not sufficient condition" when it comes to accounting for participation, and specially for sustained participation (ibid. Goodwin et al 2009) To that, most recognise the importance of affinities, collective identities, internal harmony (within groups) in successfully engaging activists and keeping them engaged (Klandermans 1997, Corrigan-Brown 2020, Bunnage 2014, Fillieule 2010, Downtown/Wher 2014).

4.15.7 Germany and Political Participation

Broadly speaking, studies about youth participation in Germany echo many of the findings that have been exposed on studies about other Western societies; that there is a growing trend of partisan disalignment among young people (Spittler 2020, Melo/Stockmeyer 2014, Gerdes 2020, Gaiser 2010) which also reflects a steady decline in electoral politics and other forms of conventional participation (Spannring et al 2008, Gaiser et al 2010, Gerdes 2020). Further studies argue that these younger cohorts are increasingly turning to more issue-based organisations and networks like environmental groups, DOI groups, among others (Melo/Stomecker 2014, Spannring et al 2008, Dalton 2017). Furthermore, the incidence of family backgrounds and education in participation has also been established in Germany (Verba et al 2005, Kiess 2021, Busse et al 2015) as has been the "gender gap" in youth participation

(Pfanzelt/Spies 2019). As in many other Western Democracies, studies of participation have also tackled radicalisation and extremism (Uba/Bosi 2021). Studies of right-wing extremism among youngsters, stress the salience of parents, background, negative identity formation and networks, among others (Braunthal 2010, Edelstein 2005, Rieker 2006, Siedler 2006) while other researchers have focused on the networks and identities behind Islamic extremism (Yilmaz 2019, Said/Fouad 2018). As in many other countries, the *Fridays For Future* movement has developed and expanded quickly in Germany; the report written by De Moor et al (2020) states that by late 2019, about a year after the first strike took place in Berlin, the composition of the group had expanded, and people 20- 35 made up for almost 40% of the protest participants. Moreover, the protests had been supported by other local networks and organisations like NABU, *Antifa*, *Omas gegen Rechts*, *Greenpeace*, among others.

A salient caveat in the German case is East- West divide as an additional variable (Gaiser 2010, Rensman 2019). Many of the scholars suggest that, while German youngsters tend to rank higher than their European counterparts in willingness to participate in elections and satisfaction with democracy, East German youth tends to be slightly less satisfied with democracy, less willing to participate and more likely to sympathise with extremist views (Busse et al 2018, Braunthal 2019, Shell Jugendstudie 2019) this has been (at least partly) attributed to the different historical trajectories that each area of the country followed after the Second World War, which has left West Germany with a strong organisational tradition and East Germany, after the demise of the GDR, with no long-standing organisations and more distrust towards such groups (Gaiser 2010). Additionally, the official data also suggests that East Germany remains less ethnically diverse than West Germany; according to the official data from 2019 and 2020⁷, the percentage of people with migrant backgrounds was of 26% out of which almost 95% lived in West Germany and Berlin.

Given the growing number of people with migrant backgrounds living in Germany, their political and social participation has also become a subject of research. Studies about migrants and participation have analysed not only voting behaviour, membership in parties and associations but also migrant representation among elected representatives (Schönwälder 2013, Spaiser 2012, Berger et al 2007, Loch 2009). In the case of the first-generation migrants, the more obvious barriers were language proficiency and citizenship. Yildiz (2016) and Schönwälder (2013) present studies reflecting this situation; the former presents evidence from case studies suggesting that the lack of proficiency in the official language became an obstacle for migrants seeking to access the labour market, but also social services and the public sphere and the latter exposes that even those highly educated migrants (who are the ones

⁷ See: Federal Department for Statistics: <https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/Forschung/Veroeffentlichungen/Migrationsbericht2019/PersonenMigrationshintergrund/personenmigrationshintergrund-node.html>
For 2020: Federal Agency of Political Education. <https://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61646/migrationshintergrund>

that ultimately make up for the quotas in representative instances) face the initial hurdle of learning the language and understanding the political landscape.

Further studies have stressed that while peoples of migrant descent are less represented in political parties and conventional associations, peoples of Turkish and Arabic descent are more often associated with migrant organisations and groups adding that, whether or not this fosters or prevents full political participation in conventional instances is unclear (Berger et al 2007.) but it is said to provide some advantages in terms of association and integration, when compared to migrants in other countries (Loch 2009). In a similar line, Spaier (2012) presents evidence of notorious online political deliberation and participation of youngsters with migrant backgrounds in Germany, despite the lower levels of participation in other instances.

Linguistic hurdles are not exclusively a problem of the migrants; on the contrary, they seem to pose a barrier for many youngsters. The 2010-2011 study *Sprichst du politik?* combined qualitative and quantitative data in order to explore the effects of language on youth and their political interest. The study suggests that young people interviewed perceive the language of politics as “artificial, complicated and unclear” and some even considered that politics is “like a private club with its own rules, rituals and routines that you can’t really understand” (Arnold et al 2011, 7). Because of this encrypted language, the study claimed that youngsters criticised the media, the political actors and the education system. Interviewees considered that politics is a science itself and that in that sense, it has its own specialised language. Nonetheless, some interviewees still recognised the relevance of this artificial language because they saw it as an expression of distinction and of being educated.

Kneip et al (2020) explore the issue of legitimacy of the political system. The authors introduce a paradox in the analysis of political legitimacy; they argue that while the dominant societal discourses seem to focus on growing division and polarisation, the macro-level democratic indicators suggest that democracy has never been stronger (democracy barometer). The authors claim that growing inequalities and polarisation have left “vacuums of representation” on both sides of the political spectrum, leaving spaces for political actors like the AfD which in their words “express no loyalty towards liberal democracy” (Kneip et al 2020, 5)

From a more theoretical perspective, Gerdes (2020) has approached youth participation by first considering the significance and implications of the concepts of youth and politics; the author questions the validity of the category young, considering how it differs in different works (and in different institutional contexts) and because it can eclipse the different life realities within cohorts. Moreover, Gerdes questions the category of “migrant” applied without rigour to youngsters who are second, third or even fourth generation. Lastly, he adds, the study of political participation will also be shaped by the kind of definition of politics that scholars use.

The author contends that in the dominant political parties, SPD, CDU, CSU, young people have been usually underrepresented and the membership of their youth organisations (JUSOS Junge Union) has been in decline. Still, he argues the new parties have been an exception to this, making particular emphasis on the Green party as noticeable exception, because in this party young people are overrepresented. In addition, he highlights that membership in political parties, as well as membership in other non-political associations has been decreasing and the trust in politicians is lower than trust in institutions and in other political actors (like NGOs).

Using mixed data from the MYPLACE project, Busse et al (2018) reveal the influence of Germany's traumatic history on the political attitudes and identities of young Germans. Moreover, the scholars point at prevailing differences between East and West; these had to do with the perception of the current political system and with the perception of the traumatic past. According to the qualitative part of the study, East Germans were more likely to hold critical views of the dominant discourses about the former GDR and more nuanced views of this period. Lastly, the study argues, is that, electorally, were more likely to vote for 'extreme-left or extreme-right' parties (ie. to deviate from the centrist consensus). The authors attribute some of these differences to the socialisation received at home; even if the interviewees were born after the reunification, their parents experienced the "two Germanies" directly and thus this influenced the kind of memories and thoughts they transmitted about this time. Besides this, the scholars argue that West Germans were still more likely to have been raised in a multicultural society than their Eastern counterparts.

4.16 Germany and Political Education

Political education in Germany operates in different instances, both inside and outside of the channels of the formal education system, (Hafenecker 2018, DIJ 2018). As much of the specialised literature has stressed, volunteering, civic involvement and participation in co-determination instances is vital in fostering democratic skills and values among young people, which are essential in sustaining and legitimising a stable democratic system (Gaiser 2010, Almond/ Verba 1963, Patrikios/ Shepard 2013).

Considering this value for the sustainment of democracy, since 1945 Germany has supported and promoted youth associations under the principles of plurality, subsidiarity, and federalism. There is, thus, a long organisational tradition (Gaiser 2010) with some particularly strong players (Busse et al 2015). The goals of political education are seen as instructing in democratic values, political system to "foster the stability of the democratic political system" but also as preventing radicalisation and extremism (DIJ 2018, 5). Political education at schools is professionalised and is governed at the level of the federal states, hence it varies among states and school types. Besides lectures dealing with

theoretical aspects of democracy, schools (and universities, colleges, education institutions) have instances of representations for pupils (or students) where representatives are democratically elected. These instances of representation are believed to have a teaching purpose as well: to promote democratic values and participation through direct experience (Kiess 2021). In addition, some schools have working groups (A.G.) for specific issues (oftentimes environmentalism, anti-racism, etc.) where pupils can engage and develop projects in small groups. Extra-curricular political education is voluntary and is supposed to be reachable for everyone. Besides the numerous associations and interest groups (for political parties, NGOs, workers' unions, etc.) there are also youth parliaments, a Youth Ring (Jugendring) and a Ring of Political Youth in each city. These instances also have the function of representing youngsters but also serve as spaces for learning democracy. In fact, studies about young parliaments in Scotland suggest that those who are part of these groups can be more likely to volunteer and be interested in politics later (Patrikios/ Shepard 2013).

Some of the agencies and programmes designed to offer political education and gather information about political interest and participation are the Federal Agency of Political and Civic Education (www.bpb.de), the German Institute for Youth (DIJ) and, most recently, the programme *Demokratie Leben* which is a federal initiative created to offer political education and also prevent all forms of radicalisation and extremism (DIJ 2018, 5).

The state-led and funded instances of political education are articulated around the Beutelsbach consensus (see: <https://www.lpb-bw.de/beutelsbacher-konsens/>). This is the result of a workshop held in Beutelsbach in 1976, which sought to set the boundaries and the guidelines of political education in Germany which articulates around three dominant principles:

1. The indoctrination prohibition: pupils should not be overwhelmed with one-sided information and should not be indoctrinated by encouraged to form their own opinions about politics and to question the information they receive.
2. Treating controversial subjects as controversial: when discussing topics that are grounds for societal and political controversies, teachers/ instructors should treat these issues as controversies and present all sides of the discussion.
3. Giving relevance to the pupils' own interests: meaning politics teachers should encourage pupils to discuss political topics considering how their own interests and livelihoods are affected by specific problems. This should encourage critical assessment of political situations.

Besides this, workers' unions, migrant organisations, political parties also offer their own instances of political education and deliberation, usually focused on their own topics of interest and targeting specific cohorts.

4.17 Youth and (or as) Intersectionality

As previously cited, Gerdes (2020) points at a paramount challenge in studying youth participation, which is precisely, who can call herself young? Broadly defined, youth is understood as a transition phase that mediates the stages of childhood and adulthood; this has biological but also significant social and personal determinants (Billari 2004 Roberts 2018). When it comes to the social and personal determinants, scholars have identified a few “passage points” namely, moving out of the family home, choosing a professional path, becoming fully integrated into the labour market, starting a stable partnership and, in some cases, having children of their own (Roberts 2018). Youth is usually seen as a phase of identity construction and definition and a period during which peers and other external influences become more relevant (Fillieule/ Neveu 2019). Roberts (2018) considers that while political socialisation starts earlier in life, and young children know something about the kind of political system they live in and its main figures, it is only later that they can make up their minds about this. Roberts’ posture grants saliency to the youth years as a key period during which long-lasting political attitudes (even if that is apathy and distance towards politics) are shaped.

These transitions are experienced differently by young people in different countries and even within the same country, and it is precisely the struggle that younger generations have faced in these transitions what is seen as an important factor in the development of their political thought. In fact, the effects of the financial crisis and of the precarization of labour markets on young people’s chances of swiftly completing these transitions hence scholars stress the present of younger generations in the anti-austerity protests (Zamponi/Fernández González 2017, Andretta/Della Porta 2020). In that sense, and after having done a “theoretically sensitive analysis of the data” as suggested by Straussian GTM, this work portrays youth and the belonging to a generational cohort from an intersectional perspective, understanding that factors like class, gender and education play a paramount role in young people’s socialisation.

When it comes to the study of generations, Mannheim’s seminal essay *The Problem of Generations* continues to be an obligatory reference for sociologists engaging in cohort- focused research. Mannheim defined a “generational actuality” to refer to the specific period during which a specific cohort is socialised and comes of age. Moreover, Mannheim discusses generational units, which are the individuals of the same cohort who develop a different mindset and views which they usually hold throughout their lives. In that sense, generational actuality is given by the fact of being socialised during a similar time, exposed to the same structural conditions, institutional settings, and dominant discourses. Whereas the generational units are more related to the concrete ways in which people will experience structural changes and institutional settings, depending on their specific milieu and sociodemographic conditions. While Mannheim’s approach to generations has become an obligatory reference for scholars working on cohort- generational research, some social movement scholars have taken a somewhat different approach to the question and definition of generations:

More recently, such a conception of the generational unit has been challenged and partially modified, with the argument that it is not common age that necessarily matters but the common moment of involvement in a social movement (Glasius & Pleyers, 2013 cited by Bertuzzi 2019 1558)

I here adopt this perspective, and in particular the definition of political generation proposed by Nancy Whittier (1997) as the combination of “all micro-cohorts that participate in a given wave of protest” (p. 762). As specified by the author herself, in fact, “although the micro-cohorts that make up a single political generation differ from each other, their perspectives overlap as a result of basic commonalities in their movement experiences” (Bertuzzi 2019, 1559).

A glance at the literature review quickly reveals that the concept of political generation, or even youth activism is far from having unified and consensual definitions. Some of the studies discuss youth participation in reference to adolescents and young adults until the age of 21, whereas others define youth activism as the political engagement of those between 14-25, or 14 and 27. Lastly, some of the studies target specifically young adults from 18 to 35. The implications for the very definition of youth are varied; considering the age span that is analysed (14 to 21 is shorter than 16 to 30, etc).

This work and the research project targeted young adults between 18- and 35; who, following popular conceptions, include “millennials” (1981- 1996) and GenZ (1997 onwards) (Andretta/Della Porta 2020). These are supposed to be the two generations considered to be “most global” in their views, which have grown up after the end of the cold war and came of age when the war on terror had started; these generations were shaped by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the financial crisis of 2008 and to some extent the precarization of the labour markets and the impending climate crisis (Andretta/Della Porta 2020, Zamponi/Fernández González 2017). In Germany, this generation has either only known the current (and finalising) coalition government throughout their adult lives, and certainly during their time as activists. These generations have come of age during decades of environmental crises, leading to intense political debating and to the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015.

While it is in fact difficult to talk about clear-cut generations, the effects of a specific socialisation with specific structural conditions and concrete societal values on political views and attitudes have been explained by Grasso et al (2017, 2018) on their research about the effects of Thatcherism and Blairism on the political views and trajectories of British generations. Furthermore, on the topic of generational attitudes Sloam and Henn’s study (2019) present evidence of visible lines of orientation ideological among British youth. Among these, the “young cosmopolitans” were particularly salient in the study. These were described as tolerant of ethnic, sexual and gender identities, pro-Europe and in favour of increased government spending.

The generational label, or rather the “young adult” label is supported not by precise distinctive time-frameworks, nor is this an analysis of cohort as an intersectionality; participation research recognises the incidence of age in different mechanisms of participation (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Grasso et. Al

2017, 2018). Still, most of the social science research recognises the incidence of other aspects such as education, social class, parents' political involvement, biographical availability as strong predictors for different forms of participation (McAdam 1988, Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019). Moreover, scholars have also shown the cleavages within the young, stressing that it is mostly the educated and middle-class segments of cohorts that are most likely to participate politically (Dalton 2017)

Considering the above, any analysis of youth participation benefits from the contributions of the intersectional approach which has been particularly fruitful in the realms of feminism and minorities in general. This approach to qualitative analysis seeks to understand people's positions and grievances considering different mechanisms of domination can combine creating new forms of disadvantage and oppression (Creenshaw 1991, 1244). The concept was originally coined by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Creenshaw who drafted a widely known article in the early nineties to address the problematics of black women in terms of being subjected to different forms of structural and political forms of domination. Albeit having unclear boundaries and posing difficulties in the very definition (Collins 2015) intersectional approaches have also been used by social movement scholars, precisely to address the issue of multiple identities and differentiated situations of domination (see: Terriquez 2015, Terriquez et al 2018). In Germany, scholars have used this analytical framework to address the differentiated problems of youth, migrants, and women. To name only a few examples; intersectional approaches include the study of the multiple identity constructions of female migrants (Al Relholz 2012), of the nuanced character of political representation, at a time of increasing numbers of people with migrant backgrounds elected for public office (Donovan 2012) and of how class, but also ethnicity and gender shape the participation in sports clubs (Nobis/ El Kayed 2019).

Considering this theoretical framework, this work is based on an expanded view of political participation inspired by Van Deth (2014), Pickard (2019), and Dalton (2017) that addresses either state actors, or citizens or both in order to promote change either through institutionalised mechanisms of action, or through bottom-up pressure, or by promoting grass-roots connections, small-scale solutions, and a shift in cultural values. Furthermore, this study investigates specifically sustained and collective participation (Fillieule/Neveu 2019, Corrigan- Brown 2020): this work studies young people who have been politically engaged with one or more groups for at least two years during which they have been constantly interacting with the group (s), learning repertoires of action and deliberation. Their self-declared experiences and interpretations are here analytically reconstructed based on the field-habitus theoretical toolbox (Bourdieu 1984, Crossley 2003, 2004, Fligstein/McAdam 2012).

5 Interviewees

In order to offer some context to the data and the analysis presented here, the activists and their profiles will be briefly described. For more detailed information about each activist, their pathways and profiles see annex I and II. These brief summaries include two types of information: socio-demographic information and their organisational affiliation. To this point, it is relevant to highlight that given the selection process (see: methodology) activists were mostly contacted through a specific organisation but some of them militated in different groups. I will first present the information about those who responded the biographic interviews and then I will follow to include the organisational and expert interviews.

Anna was 30 years old and militates in a LGBTQ/ feminist group, she is also connected with feminist and environmental networks. She was born and raised in a small city in Central Germany which she described as Catholic, conservative but tolerant. Her father worked in IT and her mother was a home maker for a few years and then started working as a homemaker. Anna claimed her parents were not particularly political, but still followed news and voted. Anna studied special education and art therapy and has worked as a counsellor. At the time of the interviews, she was working with an organisation that offers counselling and workshops for young women and girls. At 14 she joined an eco-path at her school and this experience shaped her significantly. She spent a year as a volunteer, co-founded an environmental association and, at the time of the interview, she had been active in the Hambach Forest protests and continued to be a conscious consumer. The main concerns that propel her activism are environmentalism, feminism and LGBTQ rights; the later have become increasingly important since she “came out” to her family and experienced some resistance and since felt discriminated at a Catholic organisation she used to work for.

Christian: At the time of the interview, Christian was a 26-year-old student of renewable energies and had been a member of *Greenpeace* for over three years. He comes from a small city in Southern Germany where he grew up close to nature and in a family that was interested in and informed about politics; his mother was part of the environmental movement and briefly joined the Green party and his father was active in social engagement. His mother is a nutritionist, and his father was an artist and gardener. He described himself as someone who grew up being environmentally aware and interested in politics and global events (which he attributes to his parents’ influence) but this was intensified thanks to his experience as a volunteer in South America. He described this experience fondly, and as something transformative that made him more aware of global inequalities and environmental problems. Besides joining *Greenpeace*, he has become a more conscious consumer, he joined Food Share and attended some of the Hambach Forest demonstrations. At the time of the interview, Christian was the speaker and coordinator of the renewable energies working group.

Dilek: The first time we met, she was 30 years old, working at the university, at a restaurant and about to start writing her master's Thesis in German philology. The initial contact was established because of her militance with a feminist group, but she quickly explained that, at the time, she was more of an independent activist supporting protests and groups working on capitalism-critique, feminism, environmentalism, and anti-racism. She had recently abandoned SDS and was questioning the relevance of organisational affiliation in her activism. Dilek was born in a major German city to a family of Turkish migrants. She considers her early experiences of inequality and discrimination, as well as her consumption of cultural products, as important triggers of her political interest.

Thomas was one of the few activists who asked me to meet him at his apartment. He was also the only one who was a parent. At the time we met, he was 34 years old and still connected with *Einfach Leben*, the organisation through which I first established contact. He had recently completed his PhD in education and had been accepted as a postdoctoral researcher at a new university. He comes from a working-class family of farmers and mentioned he was the first one in the family to study at the university. As Dilek, he claimed to have experienced discrimination at school, and this is an important trigger of his political motivation. During the interview Thomas explained that *Einfach Leben* was not his only instance of political activism, but that he is connected to left leaning and (in his words) left radical networks and he supports different actions and initiatives such as (for example) the protests at Hambach Forest. He also sees himself and acts as an independent activist.

Sarah: When I met her, Sarah was 28 years old, working as an independent web designer and active in three different organisations: *Viva con Agua*, *Zero Waste* and Food Sharing. She comes originally from East Germany and grew up in a family that wasn't neither particularly religious nor political. Her father works as a manager at a major airport and her mother works as a web designer. Sarah was always interested in human rights and environmentalism but she wasn't politically active during her studies. She told me she didn't have this (activism) in her environment and didn't see this as something she could do. It was only after she spent a year in Latin America working as a volunteer that she decided to join *Viva con Agua*. Through this initial activism, she became acquainted with other organisations and sought in *Zero Waste* and Food Share was she was missing in *Viva con Agua*.

Juan: At the time of our first meeting, Juan was 26 years old, and he was enrolled at a night college. He wanted to get his grammar school diploma and then study at the university. He completed a vocational training in a medical area and during the time he worked in his field, he attended two workers' strikes. Before joining JEF he was socially engaged in different initiatives. As we met, he had been a member of JEF for a few years and the second time we met he was the local president and was also a member of the student union at his college. He was born and raised in a small city in central Germany, in a family of working-class refugees who came to Germany in the 1970s, at the time we met his father was deceased

and his mother was looking for a job. The second time we met, he mentioned he was considering joining a political party, and it would mostly likely be the Greens or the Social Democrats.

Seyran: Seyran was 28 years old at the time of the interview and had a position of leadership in the local department of IGMJ. He was born and raised in a small industrial city in NRW in a family of refugees who came to Germany during the 1980s. When he talked about his childhood, he stressed that his parents were “new refugees trying to get settled in” and that his was a working-class neighbourhood with a large migrant population. When we met his father was a butcher and his mother taught German to newly arrived refugees. Seyran completed his Basic School Certificate and started an apprenticeship where he was fired. He adds that before he was fired, he was bullied because of his religion. He sees the union as a crucial part of his life and argues that after his religion and his parents’ upbringing, the work with the union was the most defining aspect of his character.

Lisa was 22 years old and in the last phase of her studies as we conducted the interview. She grew up in a large German city in a liberal-leaning family with a strong political interest. His parents were members of the SPD and this influenced her interest. After school she started studying economic in Marburg and, in her second year, she was a volunteer supporting the SPD’s electoral campaign. After this, a friend invited her to a JUSOS meeting and she joined the group. Lisa claimed she felt very comfortable in the group and had taken positions of responsibility. Her father is a historian working in IT and her mother works for the city. As we met, she had with the JUSOS for approximately three years.

Marius: Marius was 22 years old and enrolled in a dual-study programme in the field of business management and a member of the JU. He was born and raised in a small town in Northern Germany and recalls this as a ‘rather conservative but open’ community. His father worked as a painter and his mother as a child’s nurse. As an adolescent he was part of the fire department’s young volunteers, he did some volunteering for the community and sometimes joined his father to political meetings. His father was a member of the CDU, and this is, to some extent the reason why this was the most plausible option for him. Marius first joined the party’s youth when he moved away from home to start his studies admits that once he moved to the city, he missed the tight community and the familiarity of the town he grew up in. He frequently described his political views, and the party’s strategies, as ‘realistic or pragmatic, he admitted that even though he is an Atheist he shares the party’s values.

Ludwig: When we met, Ludwig was 22 years old and was serving his second term as president of the student union. He comes from a small town in NRW and moved to the city for his studies. He became a class-speaker when he was in the sixth grade, and this was a transformative experience. He became a school speaker and volunteered in different initiatives. According to his account, he is the first person in his family to go to university.

5.1 The Organisations

MLY: As explained in the methodology, this is a young migrants' organisations with a labour orientation, and it is part of an umbrella organisation for migrant-workers. MLY has a strong local vocation, and their job is two-fold: they work as a youth centre in that they offer leisure and networking opportunities for young people in the specific district where they work and, on the other hand, they do political work. Their political work includes discussions, protesting, information-stands, writing a newspaper, podcasts, political education, etc. Murad was acting as their speaker as we talked, hence he replied to my mail. MLY was organised and ran by young people for younger people, was one of the things Murad told me. At the time of the interview, they were part of the FFF network.

JEF: The Young European Federalists is the youth-wing of the Europa Union, a pro-Europe supra-partisan organisation. JEF defines itself as supra-partisan and "advocates of the European ideal". They advocate for a deeper European Union, promotes pro-Europe politics, and demands for more deliberation and more problems to be tackled at the European level. They are present in most EU countries and have representatives in all federal states in Germany. They engage in political education at schools, electoral campaigning for the European elections. I scheduled a second appointment with Juan because, by the time I was conducting the organisational interviews, he had been elected president of the local charter.

ASTA: The student union at a relatively small university. As in most German universities, the This city has several universities and colleges which meant there were greater chances of deliberation and exchange.

SOLID Since 2007 it has been recognised as the official youth wing of the German Left Party and groups people 14-35. The campus group SDS was also recognised as part of the Left Party youth. SOLID defines itself as "socialist, left, anti-capitalist, anti-fascist and democratic".

JU Founded in 1947, it is the official youth organisation of the Christian Democratic Party and its members are 14-35. The JU defines itself as Christian, democratic and liberal. This is the largest youth organisation in Germany and in Europe (see: [Erfahre mehr über die Junge Union Deutschlands \(junge-union.de\)](http://Erfahre mehr über die Junge Union Deutschlands (junge-union.de)))

5.2 The experts or local stakeholders

Ms Vural: At the time of the interviews, she was coordinating the *Demokratie Leben* in the city. She had worked in different local dependencies related to youth and participation. Before the interview she told me she was non-partisan, suggesting her statements shouldn't be read in the light of a given

government but simply as a public servant. She is a migrant from Turkey who had lived in the city for decades and besides her professional views, she also shared some of her personal experience and impressions about the city.

Mr Schalnus: He is a local politician, member of the Social Democratic Party. Much of his work had been about education policy. At the time of the interview, his party was not part of the governing coalition but he was responsible for a dependency related to youth. Part of his specialties had been education and youth policy.

Deniz: He is a member of the Green Party (who started in their youth-wing) and has worked in local and regional dependencies dedicated to youth, integration, and participation.

Anja At the time of the interview, she was 24 years old and studying social work at the university. She was the chairperson of the local Youth Ring (JR). She started her engagement in the Catholic Associations.

6 The Field of Local Young Activism

“Everyone’s offering something, everyone’s got their own ideology” Murad continued to describe the instances available for young participation in the city and stressed that there are a lot of groups, but that most of them don’t go *there*. Similar versions of Murad’s statements were also pronounced by some of the local stakeholders. The salience of these and similar comments were starting cues of the conceptualisation that follows. Firstly, that the spaces and actors of sustained young activism are recognised as open and diverse, offering different possibilities for those wanting to engage politically but also that these possibilities seem to elude some spaces and milieus. Murad’s statements would suggest this refers to a geographical distance in the city, statements of other interviewees describe this as a distance in milieu and forms of capital. In the language of social sciences, these spaces and instances for young activism can be understood as a Strategic Action Field (SAF), as a meso-level orders that is embedded within broader and more complex networks of SAFs and is composed of smaller SAFs with their areas of dispute (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 17). Under this definition, the SAFs is linked by subjective mutual recognition and a shared belief in the goods at stake (ibid.).

This chapter presents an analytical reconstruction of this SAF of young activism, based on the concept proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). This is a SAF that has blurred borders and strong links to other SAFs, but in which actors display an awareness of being inside, recognition of other actors and a recognition of closing mechanisms. The first part of this chapter concentrates on the SAF on the inside and the second part concentrates on the closing mechanisms.

6.1 This local SAF of young activism

Throughout the interviews, activists and stakeholders recognised some groups, organisations and networks which conform the spaces available for young political action. Albeit linked to broader fields of (general) activism and politics, interviewees recognise specific instances, spaces and concerns of young political action as spaces of their own.

Most of the interviewees acknowledge some form of order within these spaces: not in the sense that they legitimise this, but in the sense that they understand what each actor stands for, the spaces it occupies and the broader networks it is embedded in: Murad sees his organisation as embedded within the SAF of migrant organisations, of young activism; whereas Lisa recognises the JUSOS within the broader SAF of the SPD, but also within the SAF of young activism and Dilek sees herself within loser networks of left-leaning activism.

Additionally, interviewees recognised groups, associations, networks acting in cooperation and sometimes in competition with one another, struggling to shape and influence public debates, to promote interpretations to social problems articulated around their ideological or strategic frames and to gain support (in the form of funding, recognition, and followers) not only for their causes but also for their strategies. Likewise, they also acknowledged the presence of (collective and individual) actors who are engaged in the long-term and believe in the importance of collective action in shaping political debates.

Murad, Mr. Schalnus, Deniz and Lisa were among the interviewees who stressed that, at least in this city, the spaces and chances of participation were broad and diverse. As I specifically asked about his both Murad and Mr. Schalnus named a few actors

Murad: (...) doing political work is always a hard () it isn't easy (...) you have the classic parties that you know and then their corresponding youth-wings the young environmental groups which are very active these days so in the political landscape you have a whole lot of youth organisations because everyone is offering something everyone has their political opinion and ideological orientation.... we are part of the migrant organisations we try to organise young migrants (organisations for migrant youngsters) you have a whole spectrum of these that are trying to organise youngsters of Turkish descent (...) we are, if you need to put us into a box although I actually don't like boxes, we are as a young workers organisation we belong to the left-wing spectrum⁸

Mr Schalnus: (...) You have the partisan youth organisations they are heavily involved and then you have the youth associations which are very heavily involved. Then you have the church associations and there you have the two largest clusters that make up for the dominance of the organised sector. Their advantage is they have structures and resources and with these they can accomplish quite a lot (...) They are very well organised, and are well articulated and well connected and they have been doing this for a long time. I mean Christian youth groups, partisan youth groups they have been doing this for decades... even centuries. And they are well set-up and have strong structures and they are active. So, it is important to have them (or rather they play an important role) but the question is how do we get the others involved? Those that lack the resources to get organised so well? The, let's say it between brackets, "independent youth organisations"⁹

8 Murad: Ja f: da da lernt man viel ne? /I: m-hm/ man äh politische Arbeit zu machen also wir wir sind ja: machen ja hauptsächlich politische Arbeit (.) und (.) politische Arbeit zu machen ist immer n hartes Eisen (.) ist: nicht einfach (.) man hat halt so die klassischen äh: Parteien die man kennt (.) dann hat man nebenbei deren Jugendverbände (.) man hat Jugendumweltverbände die momentan sehr aktiv sind (.) und in der politischen äh: Landschaft hat man von: na ja (.) hat man verdammt viel Jugendorganisationen also jeder bietet irgendwas an /I: ja/ jeder hat seine politische (.) äh: Meinung ideologische: äh: Richtung die sie haben (.) wir sind zudem nochmal ne Migranten-Jugendorganisation (.) versuchen junge Emi- Emigranten äh also (?Jugendberatungszentrum?) nochmal zu organisieren (.) von den haben sie nochmal ne verschiedene Bandbreite (.) die nochmal wiederum Türkeistämmige organisieren (.) wir sind als: ja wenn man uns in eine Schublade stecken müsste ich mag eigentlich kein Schubladen aber gehören wir sozusagen als Arbeiterjugendverband zum linken Spektrum (.)

9 aMr Schalnus das sind natürlich /I: m-hm/ ohne Frage (.) äh: es ist natürlich ein Teil der politischen Jugendverbände /I: m-hm/ der Parteien die existieren /I: ja/ mischen auch kräftig mit (.) dann haben wir die kirchlichen Jugendverbände die sehr stark engagiert sind (.) u:nd das sind schon sind zwei große Cluster (.) /I: m-hm/ die: äh fast die Dominanz des richtig Organisierten bilden (.) /I: ja/ der Vorteil derer ist sie haben Strukturen und Ressourcen (.) und damit können sie natürlich eine ganze Menge er- erreichen sie einen sehr hohen Organisationsgrad (.) /I: ja/ auch einen sehr hohen Artikulationsgrad und nen sehr hohen Verbreitungs-äh-grad (.) u:nd äh: und sie machen das schon sehr sehr lange (.) das heißt kirchliche Jugend äh: Parteijugend die machen das Jahrzehnte Jahrhunderte teilweise schon (.) /I: ja/ u:nd sind damit gut gesettet haben gute Strukturen (.) und sind auch aktiv (.) aber (.) das ist auch wichtig das es die gibt nur die Frage (.) wie kriegt man andere auch /I: m-hm/ äh in ein- in einer weiteren Gerechtigkeit mit dabei? die nicht die Ge- äh: Ressourcen haben sich so zu organisieren (.) äh: (.) ich sag mal in Anführungsstrichen unabhängige Jugendverbände (.) /I: ja/ das wird schwieriger (.) deutlich schwieriger (.) [00:09:50]

While both mentioned political parties as salient actors in the spaces of young activism, Murad included environmental groups and also pointed at their increased salience at the time. Additionally, Murad claimed that “everyone has their political orientation, everybody is doing something” which suggests that he sees a landscape further beyond the classical partisan organisations. In his description, Murad displays an expanded understanding of participation that also acknowledges less conventional actors (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019). Additionally, his statement implies that he sees this as a space of competition between actors with different ideological positions. Alternatively, Mr. Schalus doesn’t mention the environmental groups and his description mostly refers to the difference between larger (and more experienced) actors with those he calls the spontaneous groups.

As he specifically talks about his organisation within this SAF, Murad places it within different ideological and organisational spaces; he locates MLY within a left-wing spectrum, but also within the spectrum of migrant and labour organisations. Similarly, Ludwig and Marius see the student union and the local JU as embedded within broader networks of similar organisations/ instances (for Ludwig, the association of student unions and for Marius, the political party, the young-partisan organisations). This goes in line with Fligstein and McAdam’s relational model that sees SAFs as interconnected and made of smaller SAFs, but also stresses the importance of the actors’ self-recognition, their recognition of others and their sense of place in the field (2012).

Lisa and Marius had a clear “sense of their place in the world” they knew where they stood with respect to the other actors in the field of activism and they also knew where they stand within their own organisations. For example, Lisa claimed that within the JUSOS, she was part of the “pragmatic” factions (as opposed to the left-wing factions) and she also recognised her specific roles and interests. In her words: “I’m not in the mainstream within the JUSOS... the JUSOS are very left-wing within the SPD”. Like Lisa, other interviews suggest that the activists are aware of the struggles within the field, but also within their own organisations or factions; Anna recognised herself within feminism, LGBTQ and environmentalism. As we talked about gender-sensitive language, she told me that within feminist and LGBTQ circles, these issues weren’t free of contention, since activists had different preferences in that respect. Activists saw themselves as such and they all had a sense of place: within organisational or ideological groups and recognised their positions within specific issues of struggle.

6.2 The Russian- Doll

This particular SAF is not fully established but in development and it is crossed by different dimensions of action; firstly, by the SAF of politics (political parties), secondly, by the SAF of activism in general

(and not just young) and lastly by the broader orders of activism and politics at the regional, national and even international level. Hence, this space of action called the local SAF of young activism is not in a vacuum but rather deeply embedded within different broader SAFs and it is also made up of smaller SAFs.

6.3 The Field of Politics and state's SAFs

The local field of young activism is neither fully consolidated, nor is it fully separated from other fields such as the fields of activism or the field of politics. It isn't fully consolidated because even though there are numerous actors that are recognised as such by the majority of interviewees, and there are some forms of IGUs (the JR and the RPJ) these do not embark the full dimension of the SAF nor do they exercise full control over the acceptable mechanisms of action. This is partly due to the strong links (and dependency) that this SAF has with the state's SAFs and partly due to dynamism of the SAF itself which makes establishing its border a real challenge.

The field of young activism has links to the field of politics; in particular, the partisan groups (here represented by the JUSOS, JU and SOLID) and IGMJ. Even if this wasn't at the core of the discussions, most of the testimonies indicate that the activists see themselves as separated from elected politicians, political parties, professional commentators, political scientists, political education, journalists, political advisers, etc. Marius, Lisa, Dilek and Suzanne all of whom militate in partisan groups (JU, JUSOS and SOLID, respectively) saw themselves as actors linked to what many of the interviewees called "big politics" namely, the field of politics, composed by elected officials, parties and experts (see above) political platforms. Part of this link is manifest when they talk about their participation in electoral campaigns and in drafting proposals to bring to the party for a vote. Furthermore, Lisa and Marius are also members of the respective mother-organisations, whereas, at least at the time of the interviews, this wasn't the case for Suzanne and Dilek. Despite these connections with the field of politics, some of the testimonies also reveal that they see themselves playing the other game as well; competing for supporters and for the power to define and frame social problems with non-partisan groups. Competing for the support and power to frame within younger cohorts. An example of this were the discussions related to the climate crisis and to mobility issues

Marius: I use this example of the East-West intersection very often, this will sound like a very cliché CDU position but for example the *Greenpeace* activists took the stage to trash the city and say that everything is nonsense, that and just threw some really crazy suggestions out the window like for the sake of the environment we should forbid cars in the inner cities and then just pack everything with bikes and rails where we say sure, when we arrive there that would be really nice if we had a car-free inner city just for bikes and public transport the thing that's not going to happen if we just make it really complicated to drive cars in the city but in that we create reasonable offers ... if we don't have a fully built railway and just overnight we say ok

we go with the people who didn't want the tunnel built, they will be the ones crying because everything is a mess¹⁰

As we talked about environmentalism Marius often complained about the dominance of “highly ideological” actors in these conversations, under which he included political parties but also NGOs like *Greenpeace*.

The connection between this local SAF of young activism and the field of politics is not only given by the partisan youth playing on both sides, but SAF of politics often influenced the actions and postures in the SAF of young activism, either because they react to actions (or inactions) or because they establish dialogue or because activists demand specific actions from elected representatives. For instances, Sarah mentioned *Zero Waste* presented a proposal for a 'Zero Waste' city to the city major. The same major was also the target of an organised action demanding her to sell the RWE stock

Christian: We were also in touch with the city administration, and we demanded that the city sells its RWE stock that was our idea more or less, so we cooperated with Fossil Free with another organisation for this¹¹

Considering not only that the young partisan organisations seem to recognise interests and competition within both games, namely politics and activism, and considering that it often the action (or inaction) of political actors that triggers activist groups the SAF of young activism overlaps with the SAF of politics and it is strongly influenced by it. On the other hand, the SAF of young activism can also influence the field of politics; most recently, the FFF phenomenon managed to at least get political actors talking about the movement and their pleas.

The SAF theoretical toolbox defines the state as a set of different SAFs, such as government structures, education system, defence system, among others (Fligstein and McAdam 2011). The authors argue that the state SAFs can influence and even shape other fields by supporting specific factions and actors, and that they usually support the incumbent actors. In this specific case, the state's SAFs have established

10 Marius: ich nehm immer wieder gerne das Beispiel der: der Ost-West-Achse (.) /I: m-hm/ ähm: wo dann: äh offen ähm: s- s: das ist wirklich das klingt jetzt als würde ich einer aus Klischee-CDU-Meinung hier geben aber es ist tatsächlich so dass zum Beispiel die die offenen *Greenpeace*-Aktivisten da waren und äh dann die diese Bühne genutzt haben um gegen die Stadt zu wettern und auch zu sagen das ist doch alles Quatsch hier das da wird doch nur (.) Geld verbrannt Steuergelder für völlig hirnrissige Sachen aus dem äh aus dem äh: Fenster geworfen (.) das bringt gar nichts der Umwelt zuliebe müssten wir Fahrverbote machen was weiß ich (.) die dann für'ne oberirdische Lösung dann äh gestimmt haben weil sie meinen (.) äh: dass äh: man doch äh äh: Autofahrern es so schwer wie möglich machen müssen äh: zu in der Stadt sich zu bewegen deswegen müsse man alles zupflastern was geht mit äh: mit Fahrrad-äh-wegen und und Schienen (.) wo wir sagen gut es wäre schön wenn wir dahinkommen auf jeden Fall es wäre cool wenn wir ne autofreie Innenstadt haben /I: m-hm/ wo nur Fahrräder u:nd öffentlicher Nahverkehr rumfährt (.) /I: klar/ das Ding ist bloß das werden wir nicht erreichen indem wir einfach es so mies machen Auto zu fahren (.) ähm: sondern /I: @.@/ sondern indem wir [01:12:59] wir halt Angebote schaffen die sinnvoll sind weil (.) wenn wir kein (.) ordentlich ausgebautes Netz haben und auf einmal von heute auf morgen (.) /I: m-hm/ oder sagen wir über überstürzt die Leute zwingen in dieses Netz reinzugehen /I: ja ja ja/ wird das noch viel Probleme geben und die Leute die nachher vorher geschrien haben wir sollen keinen Tunnel bauen sondern die St- die alles zupflastern mit Schienen werden einfach sagen das ist doch Scheiße (.)

11 Christian: wir: waren wir im Kontakt mit der Stadt und haben die Stadt Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt)(Stadt) aufgefördert ähm (.) ihre Aktien zu verkaufen an: RWE (.) /I: m-hm/ also und das war: unsere Idee mehr oder weniger (.) /I: ja/ und dafür haben wir sogar mit einer anderen: mit Fossil Free mit einer anderen Orgasina- Organisation kooperiert (.) ähm:

and supported some young- specific instances of engagement: youth-wings of political parties, but also representative spaces such as youth parliaments, youth forums, the student unions at every university, student parliaments, school representatives. In addition, there are umbrella organisations that are expected to gather and link associations and groups of youth engagement, like the Ring of Political Youth (RPJ for its initials in German) which gathers most of the youth-wings of parties represented in parliament, and the Youth Ring (JR for its initials in German) which gathers other umbrella organisations representing many of the actors of young engagement. These are all state supported instances for participation that are expected to serve as mediators, representatives (of youth) and also spaces for “learning democracy” and promote democratic values (Gaiser 2010, Almond/Verba 1963, Patrikios/Shepard 2021). Anja, the president of the local JR described its function

Well, my name is Anja I am 24 years old and I am studying social work here () my hobby is the work here with the Youth Ring which is an association of different organisations particularly youth associations I come from the BDKJ (Federal Association of Catholic Youth) which is itself an umbrella organisation of all catholic youth associations seven in this city... The thing with the member organisations is that there is also cooperation with those who are not formal members so depending from time to time there are also with the BSV (district school representation) or now the FFF movement we take them on board for certain things but which are not officially members basically we are responsible for the representation of young people’s interests in the city’s politics. The contents we get through lengthy processes which () are democratic through meetings and through resolutions and so our task as board of directors is to implement these resolutions and make sure they reach the speakers of the political youth but also that the concerns and wishes of the young reach the city administration... and also when it comes to getting funding, we also support our member organisations¹²

Anja’s statement suggests that the JR fulfils some (certainly not all) functions of an IGU: mediating between actors in this SAF and the state’s SAFs, offering guidance, know-how, networking possibilities and gathering a significant number of the actors that make up this field. Perhaps somewhat like the field itself (which has blurred and porous borders) the JR doesn’t limit their action to working with official members but also engaging in occasional cooperation with other non-member actors. By doing this, the

12 B:Ähm () genau mein Name ist Anja* ich bin 24 Jahre alt und ich ähm studiere Soziale Arbeit hier an der Stadt :nd ähm: () genau das äh mach ich ehrenamtlich also es is quasi ein bisschen () mein Hobby die Arbeit im Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt)er Jugendring ähm: der Jugendring ist ein: Zusammenschluss aus äh verschiedenen Organisationen vor allen Dingen Jugendverbände () äh ich selbst komm aus dem BDKJ das ist der Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend () der auch wieder der Dachverband ist von ganz vielen äh:m /I: m-hm/ katholischen Jugendverbänden sieben Stück an der Zahl in Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt) selbst? () ähm () dassis äh: immer so’ne Sache mit den Mitgliedsorganisationen im Jugendring: man hat auch Kooperationen mit welchen die nicht direkt Mitglied der Organisation sind () es aber dann je nachdem irgendwann werden () zum Beispiel mit der BSV also der Bezirksschülervertretung () ähm: oder jetzt eben mit der Fridays For Future /I: m-hm/ Bewegung die man auch ein bisschen mit [Sirene] () an manchen Stellen in Boot holt aber die nicht offiziell dazugehören () insgesamt sind wir dafür da dass wir: ähm () kommunalpolitisch die: Interessenvertretung machen für () Kinder und Jugendliche: im Stadtgebiet Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt) () [räuspert sich] genau und unsere Inhalte bekommen wir da halt sehr: äh () @.@ sehr lang äh: () wierig () zum Teil äh:m in: Prozessen () die demokratisch sind aber dann halt eben nicht lange dauern in Versammlungen und so (/I: m-hm/ ähm: durch Beschlüsse zusammen wo’s dann eben unsere Aufgabe ist als Vorstand () diese Beschlüsse umzusetzen () bzw. () dafür zu sorgen dass die bei den jugendpolitischen Sprechern der Stadt ankommen () aber halt auch bei der Stadtverwaltung ankommen () die Wünsche und äh () Anliegen die Kinder und Jugendliche so haben () aber natürlich eben auch ähm () wenn es darum geht Gelder zu bekommen /I: m-hm/ und Fördermittel () unterstützen wir da unsere Mitgliedsorganisationen () [00:02:06]

RJ convey recognition to these non-member actors and their causes, as causes that are part of the field of young activism. Still, she recognises that the RJ doesn't gather or reach all actors and the know-how it offers is destined to help organisations apply for state grants. The JPR (Ring of Political Youth) was described as a similar instance for the partisan youth organisations: they offer funding, know-how and networking opportunities to the recognised party-organisations. Anja's statements about the RJ and the way Suzanne and Marius talked about the RPJ suggests these are seen (partially) as Internal Governance Units (IGUs) within this SAF. Partly because of their representative function but also because of their ability to offer know-how and resources to smaller organisations. Both umbrella organisations function at the national, regional, and local levels. The memberships can slightly vary in each federal state; for example, SOLID is an official member of the RPJ in some federal states and in some others it isn't. At the time of the interviews, it was not a member of the RPJ in this city and federal state. This had to do with the opposition from the JU

Marius: I once organised an event and then the Left youth came and it became clear pretty fast that they just wanted to make trouble because there was an issue of conflict between us and them in the RPJ which is the consortium of all youth political organisations. Organisations receive funds from the federal state and these are managed autonomously and the decision about who gets to join this RPJ is also autonomous, made by the members. There is a self-administration of funds, you receive funds from the federal state and the decision of who joins this RPJ is also autonomous. If you are accepted you receive funds, the things are, these Left youth they are not members (...) So from time to time there are discussions, and heated discussions about whether or not they should be accepted. We as JU have a clear position: as long as they continue to hold positions that are against our constitution, we cannot accept them¹³

As described by the interviewees the JR and the RPJ appear to be clearly linked to the spaces of politics and to the state's SAFs: partly because of the partisan nature of the RPJ and partly because the JR has direct dialogue and cooperation with the local authorities. In this vein, Marius and Suzanne claimed that the RPJ is also an instance through which the state channels resources for the member organisations. The access to this group grants not only legitimacy (symbolic capital) but also funding for the organisations and access to spaces of deliberation (financial and social capital).

Similarly, the student unions at universities and colleges are established to represent the interests and issues of students before the university, to support the students but they also channel some of the funding available for young initiatives. As Dilek remembers from her now extinct group for peoples of colour,

¹³ Marius: ich hab tatsächlich mal eine Veranstaltung gemacht da kamen die Jungen Linken (.) /I: m-hm/ ähm: hat sich aber schnell rausgestellt dass die einfach nur stänkern wollten weil grade'n Thema war wo sie (.) n Konflikt mit uns im: Ring der politischen Jugend haben (.) /I: ah: ok/ äh der Ring der politischen Jugend is ja der Zusammenschluss aller: jugend:politischen Organisationen /I: ja/ zur Selbstverwaltung des Geldes was man da an Förderung bekommt vom Land (.) und ähm: (.) die entscheiden diese dieser Ring der politischen Jugend entscheidet auch selber w:elche Organisation aufgenommen wird (.) /I: m-hm/ in diesen: Ring der politischen Jugend und nur wenn du aufgenommen wirst kriegst du auch Geld (.) /I: ja/ das Ding is ich glaub diese: die Jungen Linken sind grade nich drin (...) [00:13:39] (...): u:nd da sind immer regelmäßig wieder Diskussionen darüber und hitzige Diskussionen auch ob man sie aufnimmt oder nicht (.) Wir als JU haben die klare Position solange sie sich (?aus unserer Sicht?) verfassungs:äh:feindlich äußern können wir sie nich aufnehmen (.)

many of the student initiatives receive their funding through the student union, and thus, rely on them to continue their work

Dilek: No, the group no longer exists. That was a project funded by ASTA and due to political differences with the ASTA personnel the project was shut down the funding was taken away¹⁴.

Dilek's experience with the group for peoples of colour, and the conflict between the JU and SOLID, point at a situation in which the state support reaches some instances (like those in the RPJ or in ASTA) and the further distribution of the resources is dependent upon these (more consolidated) actors. Marius describes a situation in which the actors already accepted in this instance of coordination can determine whether or not other actors are allowed to join. In consequence, these dynamics can illustrate the ways in which the state's SAFs can influence the SAF of young activism, by supporting specific actors and letting them in charge of distributing resources within the field.

Besides direct support, the state seeks to influence the forms and expressions of participation through different initiatives like *Demokratie Leben*. Ms Vural, a local stakeholder who has a long-time experience working with youth programmes and was also the local coordinator of the program saw prevention of radicalism and violent activism as part of her job

Vural: We have to and take a look at these milieus... what kind of values are being taught? Which values are dominant? What kind of role is the virtual world playing? Also in the politicisation... what is the role of the countries of origin? Erdogan or Putin as role models... always present in the kids' rooms or in the living rooms... which is why we have to take a look at this...of course we say the AfD... there is clearly a right-wing extremist goal, that is clear, the right-wing extremist goals are clear but we also have to keep an eye on the migrant milieus because they are just as much at risk¹⁵

Ms Vural emphasised on the migrant milieus partly because she considered that other threats of radicalisation were being better monitored than some of what she considers the risks of pro-authoritarian values among migrant milieus. Her explicit concern with extremism among young people reflected some of the mission statement that have been attributed to political education; not only promote civic values, teach democracy by opening spaces of participation but also preventing what are considered negative

14 Ne die Gruppe gibt's leider nicht /I: ah/ mehr das war ein Projekt das vom Asta gefördert war /I: mhm/ u::nd ähm das wurde ja aufgrund von politischen ähm Differenzen mit dem Asta-Personal irgendwann niedergestampft das Projekt /I: mhm/ die Gelder wurde entzogen

15 Vural: wir müssen hingehen und sagen wie sehen diese Milieus eigentlich aus? ja? welche Werte werden da überhaupt vermittelt? welche Werte sind da überhaupt sagen wir mal (.) lebendig? /I: m-hm/ ja? was spielt die äh virtuelle Welt für eine Rolle ja? auch an der Politisierung (.) inwieweit wirken die Herkunftsländer in diese Milieus rein? /I: m-hm/ Erdogan als Stichwort (.) oder Putin ne? im Kinderzimmer (.) im Wohnzimmer (.) ne? permanent präsent (.) deswegen müssen wir gucken ne? also wenn wir sagen AfD klar ne? dann ist das völlig klar rechtsextreme Ziele ist völlig klar (.) aber wir müssen auch in die Migrantenmilieus schauen weil (.) die sind nämlich genauso gefährdet letztendlich (.)

forms of politicisation, in particular radicalisation (DIJ 2018, Arnold et al 2011). Suzanne, for example, claimed that the state had decidedly acted against specific expressions of youth activism

I have seen myself so many crass examples of how the state simply acts wrong... for example at the Hambach Forest there was a big operation recently that costed a lot of the tax-payers' money and that was completely unnecessary. What happened is there was an employee from RWE I don't know for sure what he was doing but, apparently, he was walking around with a saw, I don't really know what he was doing... Suddenly someone threw a bucket at him from a treehouse... to scare him off because he was walking around the trees with a saw... but they didn't even hit him. The next day there weren't two police officers there to solve this... there were two helicopters, 40 vehicles, a lifting platform...so there you have ask yourself what interests are being represented¹⁶

Suzanne complained about what she considered an excessive response from the police and from the state. In addition, she added that the regional authorities had tried to block the access to the forest by cancelling train rides on the day of an important demonstration. As she talked about her experience with protest, she also stressed that the FFF were very peaceful but still the major had refused to talk to them and many politicians continued to criticise them assuming that they simply wanted to cut school. The attempt to contain and prevent some of the HF, the major's refusal to talk to FFF activists and the efforts to prevent and monitor radicalisation suggest that not all forms of youth participation are acceptable and that, as in the SAFs described by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) the state can mobilise physical or symbolic power to set the boundaries of what is acceptable in this field.

In this vein, the testimonies suggest that the SAFs of the state can and do in fact privilege certain actors (but also certain actions) in the SAF of young activism. Promoting civic values and legitimising democracy is part of the goal of the instances of political education, including schools, universities, external programmes, and campaigns. Furthermore, Suzanne and Dilek's testimonies suggest that the state's support accentuates internal inequalities in the field, between supported organisations and those that are fully independent.

6.4 The Local Dimension

The descriptions and the opinions often referred to spaces and dynamics of participation at the local and federal level. Nonetheless, most interviewees emphasised the local level partly because the

¹⁶ Suzanne: ich hab auch selber so viele krasse Sachen mitbekommen (.) wie der Staat einfach falsch handelt (.) ° also zum Beispiel: im Hambacher Forst? /I: m-hm/ gab es äh: vor einiger Zeit einen Großeinsatz (.) /I: mhm/ der Ummengen an Steuergeldern gekostet hat (.) der komplett unnötig war (.) und zwar der Fall war (.) da war irgendwie'n RWE-Mitarbeiter (.) ich weiß nich genau was der da gemacht hat entweder irgendwie ist der ner Säge rumgelaufen oder sonst was (.) ich weiß nich was der genau gemacht hat (.) und dann wurde anscheinend ein Eimer auf den geworfen (.) von'nem äh Baumhaus aus (.) weil der vertrieben werden sollte wenn der da so mit so'ner Säge @rumläuft bei den Bäumen@ (.) u:nd der hat den noch nich mal getroffen (.) am nächsten Tag kamen nich zwei Polizisten um den Fall zu lösen (.) es kamen zwei Helikopter (.) äh: vierzig Einsatzwagen (.) eine Hebebühne (.) ähm: (.) also (.) wegen einem angeblich geworfenen Eimer (.) und da fragt man sich schon (.) welch wessen Interessen vertreten werden (.)

questionnaires required information about the local dynamics, but also partly because it is at the local level that many groups, networks and associations organise, and it is at the local level that many of the interviewees have gained their knowledge about young political action.

The interviewees not only recognise the presence of local structures, but also the existence of very local dynamics; the city is said to be more liberal, diverse, and open than most German cities and thus, most interviewees claimed that young activism was a lot more developed and advanced than in other cities, partly because of the diversity of organisations partly because of institutional support at the local level. Anja stressed that the city's major was making efforts to improve the participation of young people in the city

Anja: The will is definitely there and that is also because of the major Ms. K, she helped the city gain this status of children and youth friendly commune (...) she has the will to make this progress¹⁷.

Anja reflects the opinion that some of the other local stakeholders also expressed: that the city is particularly open for young people to participate and this partly because of the major's commitment. Her statement presents a top-down view of the city administration and of the opening of opportunities. Sarah shared this view of this diverse a dynamic field of young activism and contrasted this to the very limited possibilities she knew in her home town.

In a similar vein, Lisa pointed at the different dynamics that she had witnessed in the city, compared to Mannheim. From her time there, she remembers a less crowded field than the one in her current city and she also recalls a different intra-organisational dynamic within the JUSOS

Lisa: well I think in Mannheim the JUSOS were by far the most engaged youth organisations... SOLID from the Left Party youth was barely there and the Green Youth was also very small, the Junge Union also very small so that means we sort of had a monopoly for youth organisations there weren't that many other things so there was the DGF Youth (German Federation of Workers Unions) and we worked with them a lot... so it was well connected, so to say, but there wasn't much else so that means many people came to us like I would like to get involved and you guys were the first result in Google ... and we were also the most present and this is obviously different in this city... here there is every party every organisation, every

¹⁷ Anja: der Wille ist auf jeden Fall da aber das: liegt halt auch an: an der Oberbürgermeisterin (Frau K) die wir gerade haben
(.) die ähm: (.) genau (.) halt einfach ähm (die Stadt) mit zur kinderfreundlichen Kommune vorangebracht hat und das ähm
(.) ihr Wille da gerade ist dass es vorankommt [00:22:14]

possible organisation... and there are I don't know how many campus groups to every possible issue¹⁸

(...) the political orientation of the JUSOS is very different in Mannheim and here there are also factions within the JUSOS and so here () this city is very centrist actually, that means it's not leaning in any particular direction Mannheim is very pragmatic and then in Berlin, for instance, if I went to Berlin that would be too far left... I don't know how (this would be) so there were differences, in Mannheim there were definitely more people who agreed with me than here, here I have to fight more often¹⁹.

Lisa identified two profound differences when it comes to the JUSOS in Mannheim and in her current city; one refers to the organisation's standing within the field of young activism, which she perceived as more privileged and more central in Mannheim. She attributed that dominance in Mannheim to the reduced offer for young engagement but also to the fact that the major was a member of the SPD and, because of this, the JUSOS were in constant exchange with the major's office. Like Murad, Lisa identifies non-partisan groups, like issue-based campus groups as competitors for support and visibility and echoed his comments when she said "there's every possible group for every possible issue". In addition, she saw, an important difference in the group's internal dynamic, compared to that which she experienced in Mannheim: throughout the testimonies Lisa often talked about left-wing factions opposed to the more "pragmatic" ones, and argued that the struggle was different in each local group.

The idea of the uniqueness of this city in terms of the broad and diverse offer for youth engagement was also depicted by Murad, Mr Schalnus and Deniz; Marius also saw a certain uniqueness in the spaces of young activism but it was about what he sees as the dominance of what he considers to be more radical groups. Marius and Lisa suggest that the city, at least among the youth groups, has a stronger left-leaning faction than other cities in Germany. While Lisa experienced this within the JUSOS, Marius saw this at universities, with the salience of left-leaning campus groups, but in open debates in general

I have the feeling that some political positions have the upper hand here... positions that are, in my view, left wing positions²⁰

18 Also ich glaube in Mannheim war es so dass die Jusos mit Abstand die engagierteste Jugendorganisation war /I: mhm ok/ da gab es die Solid also von der die Linksjugend gab es fast gar nicht die Grüne Jugend war auch sehr sehr klein die Junge Union auch sehr klein /I: mhm/ das heißt wir hatten so ein bisschen das Monopol für Jugendorganisa- also da gab es halt nicht so mega viel andere Sachen /I: ok/ es gab noch ne DGB-Jugend mit der wir aber auch zusammengearbeitet haben also das war auch sehr vernetzt sozusagen /I: ja/ aber außer sozusagen dieses gab es nicht so viel anderes /I: ja/ das heißt viele sind zu uns auch gekommen so ein bisschen mit dem ja ich würd mich gern beteiligen und äh ihr wart halt die ersten die bei Google oder also wir waren da einfach die Präsentesten das ist natürlich in dieser Stadt* ganz an- also hier gibt's ja alles jede Partei /I: ja/ jede Organisation hier kannste ich weiß gar nicht wie viele Uni-Hochschulgruppen es gibt zu allen möglichen Themen (...)

19 ähm es gibt ja also bei den Jusos auch Strömungen und /I: mhm/ ähm das sind so ein bisschen Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt) ist sehr mittig eigentlich /I: ja/ also das ist nicht unbedingt in irgendeine Richtung sehr gezogen Mannheim ist sehr pragmatisch /I: ok/ Berlin zum Beispiel wäre sehr wenn ich nach Berlin gehen würde wäre das /I: ja/ wäre das sehr links ich weiß nicht genau wie (1) ja das ist halt noch also da das waren Unterschiede auf jeden Fall in Mannheim waren deutlich mehr Leute immer meiner Meinung /I: ja als hier/ und (hier) muss ich öfters streiten

²⁰ was mein Gefühl is () dass bestimmte () Positionen überhand nehmen also politische Positionen () /I: m-hm/ (?da mein ich jetzt ähm:?) also dass du () für mich linkere Positionen

In this line, Deniz goes further in that he stresses that as a big city, this is not representative of all German cities and that it has a particular history. Conversely, Ms Vurals comments brought a caveat to this idea of a very liberal and open city as she underlined that the instances and spaces for young engagement are varied, so varied that they include groups like the *Graue Wölfe*, supporters of Erdogan, etc.

Vural: well, this city is a mixed situation, and also a little but difficult. On the one hand, is this city liberal, I am not sure, but at least the way we approach other people is certainly different than in other regions that is for sure. But, on the other hand, we have a difficult mixed situation, we have Islamic associations that are very strong here, that is a very special trait, there are representative bodies of all four Islamic associations, there is also representation from the *Graue Wölfe* and from Erdogan's AKP²¹

Ms Vural considered that the city's and the field's diversity also included radicalised groups. Interestingly, Ms Vural raises the issue of youngsters of migrant descent being activated by foreign actors, like the AKP party, and thus, to some extent taking on these values but also centring their attention in debates abroad and not in Germany. The presence of AKP and similar pro-Erdogan organisations was also mentioned by Murad, who described this as an additional hurdle to their work as a "migrant organisation that tries to focus on German debates and politics because the youngsters live here". Additionally, as we talked about inequalities Marius mentioned the Kurdish demonstrations and the clashes they sometimes generate within migrant-milieus.

Besides the shared awareness of living in a city considered particularly amicable for young activism (something reflected in the variety and number of possibilities available) interviewees describe that the city has inter- and intra-organisational dynamics which set the conditions for the interaction. Starting by the robust field of activism with numerous instances of participation for young people. Besides talking about the dynamics and the spaces of participation, some interviewees pointed at very specific conditions like the tensions for urban space, as something that created very local discussions among activists and politicians; Philip talked about the conflicts between the city administration and one of the local squats and he talked about the loss of open spaces for young people. Gentrification and the lack of spaces for the young (meaning affordable spaces for housing and leisure) were mentioned by several interviewees as significant challenges and these were often discussed referring to concrete districts and spaces in the city.

Besides the references to specific urban spaces and dynamics, most of the activists described their immediate local circles as their community of deliberation and action, where they made sense of the debates at the local, but also national and international levels. The interviews suggest that actors are also

²¹ Vural: Also (die Stadt) ist äh von der Gemengelage her @schon n bisschen@ äh: schwierig (.) ja? /I: m-hm/ einerseits ist Stadt liberal? /I: m-hm/ heißt es (.) vielleicht ist es das auch (.) weiß ich nicht (.) aber auf jeden Fall die Art und Weise wie wir auf andere Menschen zugehen ist natürlich anders als in (anderen Städten) das auf jeden Fall (.) ähm: aber andererseits haben wir eine (.) schwierige Gemengelage ja? einerseits haben wir auch äh: (.) die Islamverbände die hier sehr stark wirken (.) das ist ein Alleinstellungsmerkmal für Stadt (.) / (.) von allen vier großen Islamverbänden ist Stadt (.) von den Grauen Wölfen ist (.) äh auch sagen wir mal und von (.) Erdogans AKP-Partei (...)ja? also insofern haben wir hier eine große Konzentration

embedded within the broader discourses and dynamics of the general field of local activism, the field of young activism at the federal level, the changing power dynamics in politics, the decisions, and initiatives from the state SAFs.

The Hambach Forest protests are a good example of this; these became a debate at the national level and mobilised activists from different regions in Germany and from different organisations and networks. Four of the activists interviewed (Anna, Thomas, Christian and Suzanne) attended these demonstrations, and others expressed sympathy for the groups organising the protests. Additionally, Lisa mentioned how the JUSOS drafted a resolution about the situation at Hambach. While these were not local demonstrations, they were discussed internally within local groups and networks and those who mobilised organised within their local networks and organisations.

Suzanne: we are the youth-wing of the Left party... and we do political work, like for example the stuff with the election campaign, for example... Or we do our own actions, our own things with our group like for example we go to the Hambach Forest together (...) We do a lot of things together, as youth party, like I said we often go to the Hambach Forest to support them, (we) often go together to climate demonstrations, or (demonstrations) against fascism²².

Dilek: well, I did... last year and this year too... We will organise the bus drive to a demonstration that takes place in another city... I wouldn't want to say where it is because then it is very easy to find this online (...) but this is a demonstration that takes place every year so this is a project that is close to my heart and so last year I organised this with a friend practically alone... we organise the ticket sale, we had help from an association that kindly let us use their bank account, but everything else printing flyers, making the flyers (we did ourselves)²³

Dilek and Suzanne talked about organising their local groups (or networks) in order to attend demonstrations outside the city; Suzanne talked specifically about the HF protests while Dilek preferred not to reveal the name of the demonstration. Nonetheless, both statements suggest that they were linked and constantly exposed to dynamics and discourses from other places, but they made sense of these within their immediate communities of action. In the same line, the rise of the FFF at the European, global, and national level also influenced the local field of young activism and in 2018 the first demonstration was organised in the city. Later that year, Murad and Suzanne attended the local demonstrations with their respective organisations. To that extent, the geographic dimension is significant given the routine interaction and the existing structures (either formal in the case of some

22 Suzanne: (wir sind) die Jugendpartei der Linken (.) und wir leisten halt politische Arbeit machen zum Beispiel auch bei Sachen mit wie dem Wahlkampf oder so: (.) oder machen halt inner un- unserer Gruppe selber Aktionen zum Beispiel fahren wir viel in den Hambacher Forst /I: m-hm/ oder so gemeinsam (.)da machen wir als Jugendpartei halt auch sehr viel also wie gesagt wir gehen regelmäßig in den Hambacher Forst und unterstützen da: (.) gehen ständig zusammen auf Demos für (.) Klima oder: gegen Faschismus oder so?

23 Dilek: ich hab also so was wie ich hab jetzt letztes Jahr und dieses Jahr werden wir wieder die ähm gemeinsame Anfahrt von hier* aus zu ner Demo organisieren die nicht (hier) stattfindet also mit dem Bus würde ungern sagen wohin weil das /I: ja/ da wird man dann online sehr schnell recherchieren können /I: ja/ aber das ist ne Demo die jedes Jahr stattfindet das ist ein Herzensprojekt für mich ähm das habe ich letztes Jahr auch mit einer Fr- Freundin quasi ganz alleine gestemmt dass wir den Ticketverkauf alleine gemacht haben wir haben äh Hilfe von einer ähm von einem Verein gehabt die halt äh ihr Konto uns zur Verfügung gestellt hat netterweise aber so alles andere äh Flyer gedruckt Flyer erstellt /

organisations or informal in the case of networks) but it is not overly determinant given that the locality is not isolated, and activists are constantly interacting with and making sense of debates from other places (Fligstein/McAdam 2012). Dilek offered significant examples of this as well; since she was a teenager she was influenced by transnational debates and discourses such as the anti-war movement in 2003, and later at the university she was part of a circle for peoples of colour, something which has been more widespread in Anglophone contexts but her experience of this was at her immediate level.

6.5 Young

As the theoretical chapter exposed, tackling the age boundaries when studying young activism can be difficult at least partly because of the multiplicity of working definitions (Gerdes 2020) because of the multiple additional identities and positions that the members of a cohort might have (Creenshaw 1991). Still, this dimension is expressed by the general recognition of cohort-specific groups, cohort- or generational specific concerns and problems, as well as dynamics. As we talked about whether he considered his generation had its own concerns, Marius nodded and replied convinced

I think simply the fact that we were born into a totally different social environment, some of the things that previous generations fought for are now a given... the Eu is a given, peace is a given for most youngsters (...) but some things are more difficult than for previous generations, like buying property...²⁴

Marius wasn't overly optimistic nor decidedly pessimistic about his generation's problems. But he did argue that having grown up and being socialised in a specific time and under specific structural conditions (like with open EU borders and with no wars at home) shapes their political expectations and attitudes (Grasso et al 2017, 2018) as well as the conditions in which they build their lives. Similarly, as we talked about Brexit and the work of JEF activists, Juan also emphasised the age dimension claiming most British youngsters would have preferred the UK to remain in the EU. He told me Brexit was something he didn't expect and made him think about the importance of getting young people involved

²⁴ Marius :ich glaub allein ähm: (.) dadurch dass wir nun auch'n (.) ich sag mal in ein ganz anderes gesellschaftliches Umfeld mal ähm hereingeboren sind/I: m-hm/ u:nd ähm: vieles das (.) [Lärm] das die vorherigen Generationen erkämpft haben (?wir jetzt?) [Lärm] haben ne? ähm: dann hast du halt verschiedene Schwerpunkte und dann werden gewisse Dinge bei uns auch einfach nich hinterfragt (.)/I: m-hm/ sondern sie sind einfach selbstverständlich [Tischklopfen] für uns (.)/I: m-hm/ ähm: so ist zum Beispiel die EU eigentlich (.) für die meisten jungen Leute komplett selbstverständlich (.) Frieden komplett selbstverständlich (.)

I think what happened with Brexit was that a lot of young people didn't vote... and I think this is also the case in Germany, I mean in the case of the European election so if there is a push from the right... (this could be problematic)²⁵

Juan identifies the European project as a priority for youngsters, or as Marius said something “taken for granted” because of the conditions and environment of their socialisation. Furthermore, the view of youngsters as a specific social group with actors that have their own concerns is also reflected in the fact that organisations like the JU, JUSOS, SDS, IGMJ, JEF, MLY are all official youth-wings of larger organisations. These have the specific task of representing young people's interests or have a strong cohort identity. Similarly, umbrella organisations like the JR, the RPJ have the mandate to gather and represent youth organisations and, thus, work within specific generational groups. The FFF network, which is represented by two interviewees in this sample, has no official age limits and gradually incorporated other groups (scientists for future, parents for future, queer future) but it started as a youth movement and, at the time of the interviews, it was still predominantly formed by young pupils and university students. Murad's account of how they decided to join the FFF network suggests a recognition of generational needs and concerns, even if these are also traversed by further (and perhaps more determining) cleavages such as class, ethnicity, academic education, etc. Still, Murad alluded to a generational identity as he talked about MLY joining the FFF network: when 10,000 youngsters take the street, we have to be a part of this. Naturally, being part of a migrants' organisation, Murad's view of youth was always intersectional.

Many of the organisations represented in this sample allude to forms of intersectional identities and concerns: young social democrats, young Christian democrats, young workers, young migrants, young pro-Europe groups, etc. While the age-limits varied, these were (roughly) 14- 29 or 16- 35, which embarks adolescents and young adults, using popular labels, Millennials and GenZ (Fitri 2021, Andretta/Della Porta 2020). Furthermore, the student union has no official age limit, but it is occupied by university students, who are usually in their early twenties. The above being said, the generational awareness is visible albeit unprecise (organisations have different definitions of youth, as have many of the studies on this subject) and strongly crossed by other class, ideological, ethnic, gender identities and concerns.

The generational aspect is visible in of youth specific instances (like the partisan groups, IGMJ, JEF, ASTA, school representatives, etc.) some of which, like the PRJ and the JR have specific mandates to serve as mediators between the young initiatives and the city administration and to serve as hubs for

²⁵ Juan: glaube bei Brexit war das so viele junge Menschen sind nicht wählen gegangen und ich denke in Deutschland ist das auch so umm ich denke jetzt bei der Europawahl so wenn dr Rechtarruck kommt

young initiatives or young partisan groups. For example, Anja talked about the work of the JR supporting and connecting with young organisations in the city

The thing with the member organisations is that there is also cooperation with those who are not formal members so depending from time to time there are also with the BSV (district school representation) or now the FFF movement we take them on board for certain things but which are not officially members

Anja comments on how they also work and cooperate with groups and networks outside their permanent members, like FFF which suggests that there is a flexibility in their understanding of the spaces and dynamics of young activism and that they recognised this network as an important actor. Additionally, the decision to not only cooperate with them but to organise some events about environmentalism and sustainability suggest that the organisation sees itself as a representative of youth and also as an instance that can interpret and promote the concerns of different sectors of young people.

Besides the partial structural independence of some of these actors (given that youth factions have their own governing structures, calendars, activities, budget assignment, etc.) interviewees also mentioned the differentiated power relations between competing ideological factions within each group. Lisa and Suzanne claimed that the youth- wings are often the more left-leaning factions of the political parties, as Lisa stressed: “The JUSOS are pretty much on the left-wing within the SPD”. It was precisely this idea that youth-wings have their own (apparently more left-leaning) orientation, the reason why Suzanne saw linking points between SOLID and some of the other partisan youth organisations even if she was severely critical of the mother organisations. She mentioned SOLID organised an event about Kevin Kühnert and the SPD and then about how they came to organise an event with the JUSOS and the Green Party youth

Suzanne: So, Kevin Kühnert from the SPD youth... we find him pretty cool because we share his opinions... so we asked if we could organise an event together so we did...with the left-leaning partisan youth and so it happened... but we would never organise an event with the Junge Alternative or something like that we are the left wing... The youth wings are usually very different, in terms of opinions from the mother party, they are more left-leaning so that's why it works out that we can understand each other²⁶

Suzanne alluded to specific ideological tendencies that she saw as a different dynamic to that of the mother organisations. Besides this, some of the other interviewees stressed the importance of

26 der Kevin Kühnert is ja von der: /I: m-hm/ SPD-Jugend (.) /I: ja genau/ u:nd ähm (.) wir haben (.) also halt wir fanden das ganz cool von ihm (.) weil wir auch die Meinung teilen (.) /I: ja/ unterstützen (.) und dann haben wir einfach gefragt ja habt ihr Lust äh: zusammen ne gemeinsame Versta- Veranstaltung machen wir sind ja eher: also wir sind ja die (.) Linkeren äh: Partijugenden (.) und deshalb haben wir uns halt so: ja also wir würden jetzt niemals irgendwie mit der Jungen Alternative @oder sowas@ /I: @.@/ zusammen starten also (.) aber wir sind ja eher die Linkeren und ähm (.) die Partijugenden dort sind auch von der Meinung her sehr unterschiedlich zu den Mutterparteien? /I: ja/ u:nd äh (.) sind halt wirklich mehr links und (.) /I: m-hm/ also (.) deshalb (.) klappt das dann eigentlich auch also dass wir uns untereinander schon verstehen also

generational- or cohort specific concerns in their own platform. Murad and Seyran emphasise how their respective organisations address the needs and the concerns of specific cohorts within the general target group “workers” (or in Murad’s case, working-class migrants) because they allege that there are significant cohort-specific grievances and expectations

Well that’s why we exist and that’s why there are migrant associations and that’s why we say we, as a migrant association, are not doing this for fun (...) we didn’t found this because we felt like... we are a necessity in the German society we are a necessity to the extent that we reach a target group that other associations can’t reach and the hypothesis, why do we reach these youngsters? And why don’t the others? Where does (MLY and umbrella organisation) organise? We organise in () () these are all districts with a damn lot of youngsters with migrant backgrounds are... where a lot of people of Turkish descent are and where families which are financially disadvantaged are²⁷.

Similarly, during his involvement with the union Seyran has dealt with interests and issues that fall within the intersection of “young workers” as for example, the fair payments for people in vocational training, helping them understand their rights and the importance of organising and gaining protections for the trainees (public transportation ticket for people on vocation training, in the way that university students have)

So, we had the “Azubi Ticket” that wasn’t my idea but the development (...) so the Azubi Ticket and then the free supply of educational aids, which doesn’t exist for people on vocational training²⁸

The above mentioned were union campaigns that specifically sought to obtain some protections (which are already available for university students) for young trainees; something like one of JEF’s campaigns, as described by Juan: they wanted to make sure that trainees receive more chances to use the ERASMUS Plus programme and go in exchange.

6.6 The intersections and blurred borders

There are, nonetheless, other groups like *Einfach Leben*, *Zero Waste*, *Viva con Agua*, *Greenpeace* and *Women’s Group* that have no official age-limitations and that are also actors in the broader field of activism. Still, *Einfach Leben* started as a spontaneous project created by young adults (all of whom

27 also deswegen gibt’s ja uns deswegen gibt’s äh: Migrantenverbände (.) /I: ja/ und deswegen sagen wir auch als Migrantenverband Leute wir machen die Sache nicht aus Spaß (.) äh wir haben uns nicht gegründet weil wir Bock drauf hatten (.) ähm: (.) wir sind eine Notwendigkeit in der Gesellschaft in Deutschland /I: m-hm/ (.) wir sind insofern eine Notwendigkeit dass wir eine Zielgruppe erreichen die von anderen Verbänden nicht erreicht werden kann (.) /I: m-hm/ und ne? die Hypothese warum erreichen wir diese Jugendlichen? /I: genau/ und warum die anderen nicht? ja (.) wo organisiert sich die (?Dediff?) Jugend? (.) die (?Dediff?) Jugend organisiert sich in Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt)-Comalain in Kalk (.) in (?Fingst?) (.) in Chorweiler (.) das sind alles Stadtteile wo verdammt viele Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund sind (.) wo viele türkeistämmige Jugendliche sind (.) und wo: Familien sind die finanziell benachteiligt sind (.)/I:

28 Ähm: (.) ja wenn man jetzt beim ersten Mal schaut /I: m-hm/ oder zum ersten Mal (.) da hatten wir das Azubi-Ticket das war jetzt nich meine Idee aber die /I: m-hm/ Ausarbeitung davon (.) das äh: Azubi-Ticket (.) dann: hatten wir die Lehr- und Lernmittelfreiheit die es ja bei Auszubildenden nich gibt (.)

were, at the time, university students) the local *Zero Waste*, *Viva con Agua* and *Greenpeace* groups have a strong presence of young adults (25-35) and a strong emphasis in engaging in creative and fun actions to attract young people.

Phillip: It has sort of a young target audience, I would say, most people are like mid- to late-twenties so more or less my age or a little bit older... there are a couple who are older, I mean like around 40 but most people are young, like around their mid-twenties. Many people get involved when they start their studies and then they just stay²⁹

Furthermore, *Women's Group* is embedded within the SAFs of feminism and LGBTQ activism and trying to create a multi-generational coalition and has experienced some difficulties

Many young (lesbians) don't like the term (lesbian) and say I am queer or I am women-loving I don't want to label myself so then we had the idea ok we will make his „Lesbians*“ with an asterisk for women loving women or queer women (...) I also think it's even interesting what I experience with my own friends since I am a feminist... many say oh that's nonsense, everything's said and done, there are equal rights so don't take that attitude... and I have many friends who reject this gender-sensitive language³⁰

By attempting at modifying terms and strategies, Anna stresses the differentiated reception that the discourses of LGBTQ rights and feminism might have along younger cohorts. Later on, during the interview, she also stressed that the struggles were different (for the younger women) than those of the 1960s and 1970s. Anna recognises that the contexts and the instances of socialisation have changed, and this creates new issues of discussion and contention.

The analysis of the interviews suggests that the interviewees share a view of some actors and dynamics that make up a local field of young activism, with positions, dynamics, and discourses that are contingent and bound to change; either by exogenous shocks (changes in government, state policy, etc) or by endogenous shocks, such as the rise and growth of new actors, as was the case with the FFF movement. It didn't necessary change the field in that it didn't replace the actors in dominant positions, but it certainly set the agenda for some time, mobilised support from different groups and, thus, procured new alliances. As hitherto explained, this field has porous borders for several reasons. Firstly, it is best described using Fligstein and Mc Adam's (2012) Russian Doll metaphor; in that it is a field embedded within broader fields (such as the field of activism in general, the federal fields of young activism) and it is linked to other fields such as the fields of politics and the SAFs of the state. To some extent, what the relations show, is that the local field of young activism and its actors have relations of dependence

29 Phillip: Mh: (.) ja es ist schon eher ne ne jüngere Zielgruppe ich würd sagen (.) /I: m-hm/ so z- Mitte Ende 20 dürfte: dürften die meisten /I: m-hm/ bei uns sein also so ungefähr in meinem Alter oder etwas älter: wir haben auch (.) ein paar die äh (.) schon: deutlich älter oder was heißt deutlich so (.) so um ca. 40 sind aber /I: m-hm/ die meisten sind eher: im im jungen Bereich so Mitte 20 zu Beginn des Studiums fangen viele an und bleiben dann auch viele da [00:04:00]

30 Anna: viele Junge ja aber der Begriff ist passt nicht und ich bin queer oder ich bin: /I: ok/ Frauen liebend oder ich will mich nicht festlegen oder oder oder /I: m-hm/ (.) und dann kam die Idee wir sagen wir machen'n Lesbensternchen- also für Frauen liebende Frauen und für queere Frauen /(...) finde ich auch schon wieder spannend weil ich erleb in meinem Freundeskreis seit ich feministisch bin ganz viele die sagen ja aber das ist doch Quatsch das brauchen wir doch alles nicht mehr das ist doch jetzt alles gegessen (.) /I: m-hm/ Gleichberechtigung existiert (.) u:nd stellt euch mal nicht so an @.@ (.) u:nd auch ich habe viele Freundinnen auch die geschlechtergerechte Sprache ablehnen /I: ja/ wo ich auch denke [00:38:29]

from broader fields, but it is also capable of influencing them and setting topics in the agenda. Actors closest to the SAFs of the state and politics like the youth parliaments, student parliaments, student unions, JR, RPJ, school representations enjoy financial and symbolic capital granted by the state: they receive funding but also recognition and access to spaces of deliberation which are not open for the other groups. On the other hand, IGMY benefits from the resources of a well-established organisation like IGM (Busse et al 2015) and from being part of the labour movement, which is already well established in Germany. Furthermore, the local field of young activism is also made up of smaller SAFs, such as environmentalism, unionism, university politics, partisan youth, migrant youth and loser networks and movements; all of which have their own issues of contention within them. Secondly, the borders, when it comes to age and geographic limitations are porous: the previous pages have explained the ways in which interviewees describe these spaces of deliberation as generation specific and with strong referents to local structures, constellations, and debates.

Under this conceptualisation, field membership is more dependent upon subjective standing than it is upon objective membership criteria; fields don't have fixed boundaries and can sometimes operate on situational basis, since shifting actors can define new common/ opposed interests. (Fligstein/McAdam 2012, 24).

Many of the testimonies resonate with the "two worlds of activism" as described by Busse et al (2015) given not only the profound differences in terms of access to resources, levels of professionalization and size but also the differences in terms of their general activities and profiles. Still, the interviews suggest that the worlds or instances of young participation in this city are in fact differentiated, but not only across professional- spontaneous, but along a further continuum, namely, the contention- reproduction. These polarities will also have equivalent categories in the conceptualisation of the activist habitus which will be explored in the next chapter.

6.7 The Polarities of the field

The internal positions within the SAF are perhaps best described borrowing Bourdieu's concept of "pole". Fligstein and McAdam describe the tension and the struggles between incumbents and newcomers within SAFs and how the former is usually closer to the state's SAFs and are, therefore, more capable of mobilising resources (2012, 53) but also in terms of how the latter struggle to obtain some gains and spaces of action within the SAFs. Albeit insightful and rather helpful in addressing the dynamism and mobility within the SAFs (and in addressing relations with the state's SAFs and the logics of reproduction and change) Bourdieu's poles offer the advantage of considering the dispute in meaning. Perhaps best exemplified in his literary sociology, Bourdieu sees the pole of heterodoxy and the pole of orthodoxy as defending different virtues: one defends the virtue of commercial success and the other

defends the interest in disinterest (Bourdieu 1992). Considering that interviewees described different types of groups with different meanings of activism, who nonetheless recognised the others, and believed in the goods at stake (asserting influence, gaining support, framing the debates and fostering the social change they expect through the channels they prefer), these traits described by interviewees will be described as poles.

Most interviewees insisted upon the fact that the offer for young activism is broad and diverse: this diversity is not limited to the political positions or priorities, but it embraces the size, structures, the postures towards politics and the repertoires of action. This variety of actors and positions in the field is conceptualised with the positioning along two axes: the contentious- reproduction and the professional-spontaneous. These positions and the axes are developed considering what the interviewees revealed about collective and individual actors and how they move.

6.8 Pole of reproduction and contention

The interviewees recognise significant differences in youth activism, some of which have to do with whether (individual and collective) actors are more inclined to understand activism as reinforcing instances and mechanisms of participation or rather keeping checks on power and opening spaces for new voices to participate (Spannring et al 2008, Tarrow 2008). Furthermore, this continuum is also given by the main repertoires of action and with the very understanding of political issues. In order to illustrate this in a comparative matter, I introduce this contention- reproduction continuum which should be read as such; a line along which the organisations are situated, and not as a Manichaeian opposition. This continuum borrows a term that has been widely used in social movements research; contentiousness (Tilly/Tarrow 2015, Tarrow 2008). Contentiousness in this specific case is (partially) linked to Tarrow's idea of the action of groups that lack access to institutions and challenges authority (Tarrow 2008) and to and their use of what have been denominated non-conventional repertoires of action (Pickard 2019, Spannring 2017). Conversely, those organisations and activists closer to the pole of reproduction were more likely to be closer to the SAF of politics and the SAFs of the state and, thus, they were also more likely to have more cooperative attitudes towards them. The organisations and activists in the pole of reproduction displayed actions and attitudes that reinforced (instead of challenging) and reproduced mechanisms of participation and deliberation (Spannring et al 2008) and served as spaces of representation and co-determination (like the JR, ASTA) which act to mediate between youngsters and decision-makers but also practice and sustain representative democracy (Patrikios/Shepard 2013, Gaiser 2010).

The interviews suggest ultimately differentiated attitudes in terms of attempting to create social change through incremental action and by reinforcing existing mechanisms of participation or putting pressure

on political action using big actions; but also addressing the general population and trying to create networks and communities of practice and awareness. The following statements present some of the ideas and practices as described by the interviewees and places them in these two poles

Reproduction	Contention
Marius: (...) we rather try to express ourselves through the (for us) normal democratic processes (...)	Suzanne: (...) we often go to Hambach Forest to support them, (we) go often go together to climate demonstrations, or (demonstrations) against fascism
Marius: (...) not all basis-democratic decisions are right decisions because of this we have in the reputative politics and governance forms... we have always had elites in the whole world in every field so even the people who stand against elites are actually, following the right sense, also elites themselves. So, in this sense it is important that some groups have a greater decision-making power than individuals because they are elected for that	Suzanne: (...) I think that young people are barely brought in (to political debates) which I find extremely sad and pretty bad because I think that a fully-functional state is a basis-democratic state in which everyone can participate and everyone can engage and in which each voice counts but I realise that this is missing that this doesn't happen and it is more the interests of lobbyists and the rest of the population is ignored ³¹
Lisa: We write proposals, and these go to the regional JUSOS and they vote on them and then hopefully these (proposals) come to the national JUSOS and they vote on them and then hopefully, then maybe someday they become part of the SPD electoral program. This takes time, obviously and I understand if many young people say oh, I want to do something now... but in Germany politics work through political parties ³²	Thomas: (...) <i>Greenpeace</i> does this a lot... that they go with the boats to the Heiligen dam and they organise these protests in water or they block large ships and so on... I find that attractive because it is on the one hand extremely effective in terms of getting public attention and regardless of any criticism one might have towards marketing, without public attention, nothing is going to change here... ³³

Figure 13 Poles of Reproduction and Contention

31 also ich denke dass die Jugend relativ wenig eingebunden wird (/I: m-hm/ was extrem schade und äh sehr schlecht is (.) weil: (.) ich denke ein Staat der komplett funktionieren (.) würde? und für alle gut is (.) is basisdemokratisch (.) /I: m-hm/ u:nd dass jeder irgendwie sich da einbringen kann und auch jeder quasi (.) sich engagieren kann und dass jede Stimme auch irgendwie zählt aber: (.) man merkt ja immer mehr (.) also (?irgendwer?) @merkt man das schon@ fehlt immer (.) dass äh: (.) da halt nich drauf eingegangen wird und mehr Interessen von Lobbyisten vertreten werden als die von den: Menschen die wirklich leben (.) in der (.) /I: ja/ so also: (.) die wenigsten (.) also (.) es sind ja nur wenige Leute @die Lobbyisten sind@ /I: ja ja klar @.@/ und (.) der Großteil der Bevölkerung der geht da unter u:nd das find ich sehr traurig (.)

32 Lisa: (...) wir schreiben halt Anträge die ne die werden dann irgendwie an die NRW Jusos gerichtet die beschließen die dann hoffentlich und dann kommen die an die Bundes Jusos die beschließen die dann auch hoffentlich /I: mhm/ und dann ist das halt vielleicht irgendwann mal im SPD Wahlprogramm das dauert natürlich und das ist auch für viele Leute ich versteh das auch wenn junge Leute sagen oh ich will jetzt was machen /

33 Thomas: *Greenpeace* hat das ja auch ganz stark dass sie irgendwo mit Schlauchbooten irgendwie (.) bei Heiligendamm dann vom Wasser aus Protestaktionen machen /I: ja/ oder große Schiffe blockieren und so (.) das find ich schon auch ne attraktive Version weil das einerseits extrem öffentlichkeitswirksam is /I: ja/ und ich würde schon sagen politisches Engagement braucht öffentlichkeitswirksam /I: m-hm/ bei allem (.) bei aller Kritik an Marketing die man haben kann aber ohne Öffentlichkeit wird sich hier nichts verändern (.) /I: m-hm/ wenn das nicht äh es muss erst Fukushima /: °(?)?/?/ in die Luft gehen /I: genau/ damit die CDU entscheidet wir steigen aus der Atomkraft aus (.) und dann tut sie's am Ende doch nicht

The above cited statements present some of the positions that activists took when it came to their organisational strategies, the acceptable repertoires of actions. Marius and Lisa both refer to what they consider appropriate and democratic mechanisms for promoting change. Lisa described the procedure the JUSOS follow in order to get their ideas into the party's electoral platform and while she recognises that it takes time and patience to get things done, she ultimately stresses that that's the way that politics work in Germany. This statement (which she insistently repeated throughout the interview) also reveals an understanding of politics that is closer to what has been defined as hegemonic (Manning 2010). Furthermore, it suggests that in her view, the preservation of the existing mechanisms and procedures in place is an important goal for groups like hers (Almond/Verba 1963, Gaiser 2010). Hence, these groups stand closer to the pole of reproduction. Thomas, on the other hand, highlights the importance of mobilising public opinion because he sees little chance for real change to come from elected officials or political parties. Interestingly, in this case he also talked about "effectiveness" something which he didn't otherwise use as an important argument throughout the interview. This also suggests that, as he describes them, these 'spectacular actions' *Greenpeace* displays, target citizens more than politicians. Which is the opposite to what Lisa described.

Throughout the interviews, Marius and Lisa stressed the importance of established procedures and mechanisms for democracy and transparency, but they also acknowledged that these procedures can be slow and uninviting, and that young people might be quickly frustrated by this. This was also something that Nadja, from the local youth ring recognised. Still, Suzanne and Thomas didn't exclusively refer to the pace or the complexity of these procedures, but they questioned their efficacy and the very willingness of elected officials to act. Hence, they stressed the importance of triggering a conversation and gathering grass-roots support in order to drive societal change. These and other statements in the interviews suggest that, generally, those actors are closer to contentiousness were more prone to see a democratic deficit in the instances of representation but also more prone to taking the posture of expanding mechanisms and actors of political deliberation and pressure (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019).

Contentious actors expressed profound structural criticisms, made strong emphasis on societal inequality, injustice, and a perceived democratic deficit: they claimed that politicians are too far from citizens, or they aren't interested in making significant changes or including young people, and that some of the instances of participation and representation are too far from regular youngsters (and citizens in general) and this distance seems to be more pronounced in specific milieus. These were precisely some of Murad's statements as he described the organisation; he claimed that they were a "necessity in German society" because these working-class migrant youngsters were not represented and because, in his words, "the colleagues from the political parties don't come here". In that sense, he described the organisational mission as bringing new voices and themes into the spaces of young activism, bringing political education, action and deliberation to working-class districts (Tarrow 2008).

The diagram below presents the positions of the organisational actors along the poles of contention and reproduction



Figure 14 Continuum Reproduction - Contention

This diagram presents the standing of the organisational actors represented in this sample, within the contention- reproduction continuum.

6.9 Pole of professional- spontaneous

The professionalised- spontaneous continuum reflects the differences in resources, structuration and hierarchisation that interviewees described when they talked about the different organisations and networks in the SAF of young activism. The vast majority of interviewees admitted that activism (whether collective or individual) requires resources, and sustained activism requires sustained resources, in the form of money, time, personnel, know-how, contacts, etc. As with the contentious-conform, this continuum is precisely that, a continuum along which organisations and networks are placed and certainly not a strict opposition. Moreover, the interviews suggest that for many actors the positions along this continuum are contingent because movements and organisations are constantly changing, something which resonates with Davis et al (2005) and their findings about SMOs.

6.10 Graph Positions of organisations and networks in the professional- spontaneous continuum



Figure 15 Continuum Spontaneous - Professional

The graph above presents a visual approximation to the positioning of the collective actors that were represented in the interviews. Given the dynamics nature of the field and the actors themselves, it is likely that these positions have changed and will continue to change depending on structural and

organisational factors. Those closest to the spontaneous pole were the networks with which Dilek and Thomas engage, FFF and *Einfach Leben*. *Viva con Agua*, JEF, SDS, the Student Union, MLY and *Greenpeace* represent (in this order) a continuum increasingly close to professionalism. Lastly, JUSOS, JU, *IGMetall Youth* and the local youth ring are those closest to the professional pole.

Spontaneous	Professional
<p>Thomas: Well, I would say that, within the left-wing engagement structures there are some () which are no organisations or anything but rather you say in your friends group you say something like let's go and support this demonstration, should we support this? Should we engage there and then mobilise or so? At such level I would say³⁴</p>	<p>Lisa: It's really nice that at the national level we have the federal association that we can turn to, we have paid staff and when we call them, they really have the know-how and this is their main occupation and whenever something is needed you can call the national office and they know what we should do, whenever we have questions about the statutes³⁵</p>
<p>Thomas: We were all good friends and we said we want to do something together so that was a powerful mix (...) so for a while we met every Friday afternoon and planned and did things and then it flowed into the leisure time and it was a mix of leisure and engagement (...) We made everything ourselves... (...) The first idea had nothing to do with bikes but with micro-conferences... (...) like a sharing idea of knowledge so we had two different topics each night that had nothing to do with each other... we met at people's living rooms here in the city... (...) Then</p>	<p>Christian: these spectacular images of an activist rappelling with a poster... that's not something that some volunteer does for fun, but there is a qualification process behind that. So, for example, <i>Greenpeace</i> has activists who are climbers, or others who drive boats (...) These are not low-risk activities, you have to be able to rely on the others...³⁷</p>

34 Thomas: (.) na ja das (.) ich würde ja schon sagen dass es in der Linken Engagementstrukturen gibt die kein Vereine sind oder so (.) im Gegenteil (.) grade nicht (.) /I: ja/ ne? /I: mhm/ sondern man sagt dann irgendwie in seinem: Freundinnenkreis sowas wie: (.) gehen wir: unterstützen wir die nächste Demo [Kindergeschrei] machen wir da mit? engagieren wir uns da indem wir irgendwie mobilisieren (.) /I: genau/ oder so (.) oder: (.) ja (.) au- auf so'ner Ebene würd ich sagen [00:25:10]

35 Lisa: das ist natürlich toll dass wir so einen Bundesverband haben wo man sich halt einmal dran wenden kann wir haben ja auch hauptamtliche Leute wenn man die anruft (I) die wis- die haben halt wirklich das Know how die machen das ja wirklich beruflich /I: ja/ und wenn irgendwas ist dann ruft man im Bundesbüro an die wissen das dann schon was wir machen müssen wenn wir Satzungsfragen haben

37 Christian (...) man: kann sich ja auch als Aktivist ausbilden lassen /I: ah: ok/ also: (.) dieses ähm: diese spektakulären Bilder von irgendwelchen Aktivisten die sich irgendwo mit'm Plakat abseilen /I: ja/ das machen nicht irgendwelche Ehrenamtliche mal zum Spaß sondern da steh'n Ausbildungsprozess dahinter /I: ok/ also (.) ähm zum Beispiel: dafür: also es gibt eben (.) *Greenpeace* hat Aktivisten im Kletterbereich im: äh Bootfährber- Bootsfährbereich also /I: aha/ auf auf'm Wasser ähm u:nd (.) ähm (.) ja (.) im Prinzip (.) ja (.) das isses @.@ /I: @.@/ [00:45:25] auf'm Land und zu Wasser kann man sagen eigentlich (...) lar weil: auch die Leute sich ja unterhei- untereinander irgendwie müssen sich ja aufeinander verlassen können /I: ja/ dass sie wissen was der andere macht und so /I: ja auf jeden Fall/ also es sind ja durchaus auch mal nicht so ungefährliche Situationen

came the idea with the bikes, because two of us were in Berlin and saw this at a left-wing shop³⁶

Figure 16 Polarities of the Field Spontaneous - Professional

The statements on the previous page reveal significant differences in terms of the access and the mobilisation of resources and the division of labour; Thomas describes the early days of *Einfach Leben* as a mix of leisure and engagement, they started with broad ideas about building grass-roots connections and exchange, about urban space, and capitalism-critical postures. They developed different concepts and the flexibility of the group allowed for the transition from the knowledge-exchange to the bike and mobility activism. Conversely, Lisa and Christian describe actions which rely on access to significant resources as well as very clear-cut divisions of labour; in Lisa's case, because she is part of a political party and as she stressed, they follow internal procedures that must be in accord with their statutes, whereas Christian talks about some of the high-impact actions that *Greenpeace* organises which are resource and labour intensive.

Thomas went on to stress that they had to build everything themselves and even register as an association and eventually, the idea spread to other cities. This contrasts with the situation Lisa describes where the JUSOS are already a well-consolidated organisation and can rely on the paid staff for complex questions about the organisation's regulations.

Zero Waste, *Viva con Agua* and WG had similar positions; still not as big and highly structured as the ones of the professional side of the spectrum, but they had all become registered associations (*Zero Waste* more recently than the others) and had expanded to other cities. Still, some of the testimonies reveal that they still work with a more hands-on approach, have no official trainings for activists (like *Greenpeace* and the political parties) and hence less reliance on experts. What Sarah shares about her activities with *Zero Waste* reveal on the one hand different understanding of activism (different targets, actions and issues) but also a more spontaneous and creative way of doing things closer to the expanded models of political activism (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017)

We had for example a clothing-exchange project here and more information stands (...) flea markets and Christmas markets at universities, that sort of things.

(...) We make a picnic for instance (...) we make a banner at the this eco-printer and we even made flyers that we didn't really want to give out, but just (have there) so people can look at them and so we try to make things ourselves...we had a painting table where we could put the things during the picnic or at an information stand or in these information stands we try to show a lot of recycling stuff to show...so sometimes we make peelings, or deodorant so that we can show people this is how it works.

36 Thomas:r wir haben alles selbst gebaut (.) wir haben dann selbst'n Verein gegründet und Gemeinnützigkeit beantragt haben dann selbst Gelder beantragt /I: ja/ usw. (.) und irgendwann: kam diese Idee (.) also ich glaub (.) die erste Idee war gar nicht das Lastenrad /I: ja/ die erste Idee war glaub ich der Austauschhafen (.) /I: m-hm/ hast du davon was gelesen? /I: nee/ der das war so'n Micro-Conference-Idee sozusagen (...)okay und dann kam irgendwann diese Fahrrad-Idee (.) /I: m-hm/ [00:17:59] und das war: in Berlin waren zwei von uns unterwegs und haben nen Anhänger gesehen (?und da steht dann?) du kannst mich einfach ausleihen stand da hat jemand da angeschrieben oder so bei f- äh: irgendwie vor'nem (.) linken politischen Laden

This works with things we bring ourselves or screw-top jars just to show people that is really easy so right now we are trying to make more things... self-made signs for the clothing-exchange where we list some facts really nice³⁸

Sarah was telling me about these picnics and the DOI workshops and she stressed that part of the idea was to organise events and actions that allow for creativity and leisure, but also promote conscious consumption in ways that are attractive and fun for people. In this vein, she often stressed the importance of creativity and personal input in Zero Waste and the other groups she engages with. This is something that sets these organisations apart from some of the other, more formalised groups. Somewhat closer to professional practices, came JEF and MLY which are local or youth factions of larger organisational structures; JEF works with a larger association the Europa Union and MLY is a member of a larger labour organisation which is, in turn, represented in the JR. Both JEF and MLY resorted to discussions, political education, collective bargaining as part of their repertoires of action. MLY had a smaller and less hierarchical structure.

The more professionalised organisations in this sample (the political parties, the workers' union and *Greenpeace*) have well-structured divisions of labour, they operate at the national level with vertical structures and have more or less fixed priorities and mechanisms of action, IGMJ, JUSOS, JU and *Greenpeace* all have a few paid staff.

Conversely, the spontaneous organisations in this sample had smaller groups, a looser division of labour, no paid staff. Still, this is a continuous and a lot of the groups can tend towards professionalization in order to sustain their action (Davis et al 2005), but on the other hand, new actors, networks and dissidences can emerge from old movements. An example for this is *Einfach Leben* (Thomas' group) which started as a group of friends supported by their networks of acquaintances and like-minded people, and at the time of the interview had grown significantly and some of their initiatives were replicated on other cities. On the other hand, despite the long-standing existence of numerous environmental organisations, the FFF emerged as a network of its own. The movement has grown rapidly, and it is hard to determine how it will look like by the time the first readers find these words, but at the time of the

³⁸ B: Wir haben tatsächlich ein Banner bedrucken lassen äh bei so nem Ök odruckding ähm (1) das ist was was wir gemacht haben und wir haben jetzt sogar auch Flyer gemacht die wir aber nicht so rausgeben wollen sondern dass jemand sich anguckt und wer es wirklich mitnehmen will kann das auch tun ansonsten versuchen wir alles irgendwie zusammen zu (2) klaben ähm so einen Malertisch von der einen wo wir dann irgendwie Sachen beim Picknick zum Beispiel draufstellen können /I: ja/ oder für Infostände oder dann ähm bei den Infoständen versuchen wir viel Recyclingsachen wirklich zu zeigen /I: mhm/ und dann bringen also da machen wir manchmal Peelings oder Deo um den /I: ah /Leuten wirklich zu zeigen so funktioniert 's aber das ist dann echt so was wir aus privaten Sachen mitbringen /I: jaja jaja/ und auch Schraubgläser mitbringen oder irgendwelche Dinge damit die Leute verstehen dass es total einfach ist an sich ja also im /I: mhm/ Moment versuchen wir da noch viel kommt noch viel von /I: ja/ allen und dann hat einer z. B. mal kleine Schilder gebastelt für den Kleidertausch z. B. auch wo dann so Fakten draufstehen aber total schön gemacht so T-Shirts ausgeschnitten /I: ja/ aus Pappe und da drauf gemalt und ja im Moment noch ein bisschen ich würd sagen unprofessionell aber deswegen find ich es schön /I: ja/ weil es ist handgemacht (35.40)

interviews, as I spoke two self-declared members of this network, it was still looser and more horizontal and spontaneous than *Greenpeace* or even *Viva con Agua* and *Zero Waste*.

6.11 The spaces occupied by the organisations, based on the analysis of the interviews

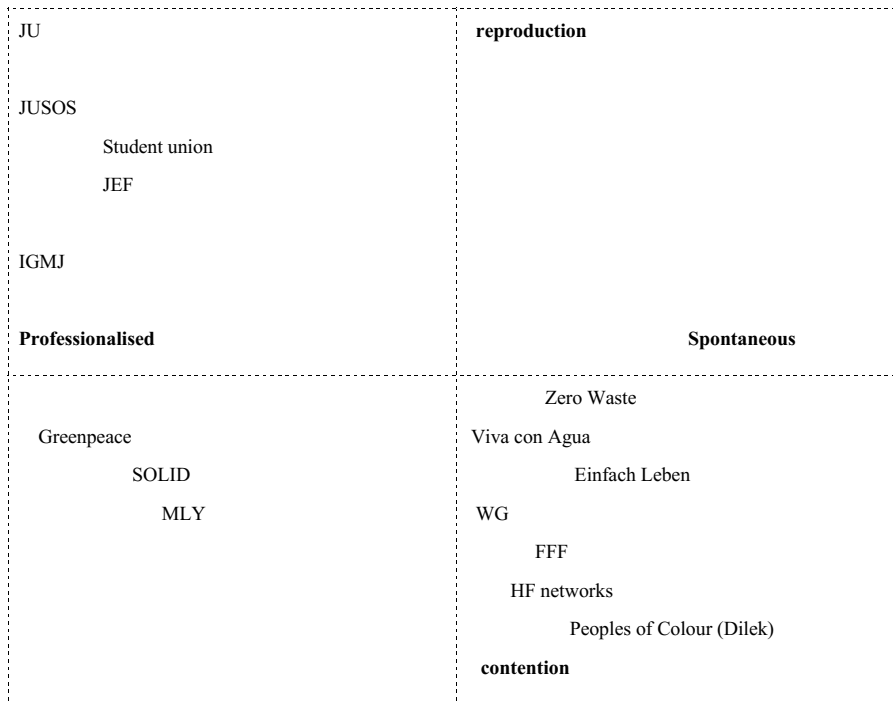


Figure 17 Spaces occupied in the local SAF of young activism

This diagram presents a reconstruction of the SAF of young activism and the positions of the different groups and networks represented in this sample. Other groups and organisations which were mentioned, like Antifa, the local squats, the Graue Wölfe, are not placed within the graph because the positions are predominantly given by the type of statements that each of them made about their organisation.

These positions are constructed based on the statements given by the participants who spoke in representation of their organisations. A few of them made reference to the activities and profiles of other organisations (for example, Suzanne made reference to the JU, Marius talked about SOLID and Thomas and Sarah made some references to *Greenpeace*) and these statements were contrasted with some of the statements given by the organisations' members and, used to check some positions and try to reflect the distance between organisational and individual positions. The descriptions given by Sarah and Thomas about *Greenpeace*, for instance, don't really contradict what Christian describes but rather give a different (perhaps less positive) view. The upper-left quadrant groups a few well-funded and long-standing organisations: these are closest to the poles of reproduction and professionalism. These were

also some of the organisations that are closely supported by the state's initiatives, and it is where many of the long-standing actors are; the JR, the JUSOS and the JU.

Suzanne described SOLID as relatively young and "poor" compared to other partisan organisations. She explained this by alluding to positions of subordination of the Left party in the field of politics and to SOLID's subordinate position among other young wings of political parties. First, she claimed that the Left party also has less resources than the other parties and then she reminded me because SOLID is not in the JPR, they don't receive this additional funding. Both Suzanne and Dilek saw SOLID and SDS as more contentious than the other political parties; they participate in electoral campaigns, but they also joined numerous demonstrations and loser activist networks, shared more critical and pessimistic views about the societal affairs, about the democratic deficit. These postures could be linked to a capitalist-critical posture which is an important element that both Dilek and Suzanne associated to the party, but it is also likely related to their self-vision as a group of opposition (to the parties in the decision-making instances) since at the time of the interviews, their mother party was in the opposition at the local, regional and national levels.

The lower left quadrant gathers an interesting group of organisations because these are closer to a contentious profile but have developed highly professionalised structures, they have a positioning within the field (in particular *Greenpeace*, which is often mentioned by the interviewees along with some of the environmental organisations as an important player) in the form of recognition but also visible in their ability to mobilise resources. *Greenpeace* is an example of the professionalised form of contentious actions, and in their own way, so is MLY. They are far less known than *Greenpeace*, but they have connections and cooperation that help them achieve their goals, and they manage a few professionalised and well-planned actions and activities. Murad described MLY as a "necessity of the German society" because, as he repeatedly stressed, this organisation opens spaces for groups that are under-represented in other youth instances (Tarrow 2008). This echoes some of the analyses that suggest that because they constitute the largest minority groups, peoples of Turkish and Arabic descent have organised in migrant associations which are well-established (Loch 2009, Schönwälder 2013). Murad's description echoed idea that SAFs can expand, or emerge, depending on the social conditions like population, economic stability, etc. (Fligstein/McAdam 2012). To some extent, Murad saw this as an expansion in the field in order to open a space for working-class migrants because he sees the challenge posed by this intersectional condition.

The organisations on the lower-right quadrant are younger and report about having less resources. These represent emerging concerns and pleas of different sectors that lack institutionalised access (Tarrow 2008). They also represent much of what has been denominated new and expanded notions of participation; targeting citizens and not only politicians, engaging in novel repertoires of action,

challenging social conventions and dealing with a broader array of issues (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Van Deth 2014).

Still, these spaces of the contentious- spontaneous often reproduced a similar dynamic to that of the dominant sectors of the field, namely, the over-representation of middle-class youngsters with academic backgrounds, and the under-representation of other milieus. For example, many of the interviewees, including those who were part of the network, described FFF as a movement of the educated middle-class. Something which goes very much in line with the findings of the specialised literature (Spanning et al 2008, Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019) that has showed how the expansion in the spaces and mechanisms of participation, even the expansion of the understandings of the political doesn't necessarily expand the participating milieus.

Given that it is not a professional SAF, or an organisational SAF, and considering the numerous overlapping SAFs, this SAF of local young activism has blurred and porous borders. But it has, nonetheless, some form of closing mechanisms. Firstly, there is an awareness of being inside: the interviewees recognise themselves, and their respective networks and organisations, as actors on the inside, with positions, cooperation, discrepancies. Additionally, in one way or the other, interviewees stressed that organisations and individuals need resources in order to remain in this field. In that sense, much of the discussion about access and the closing mechanisms became a discussion about different forms of inequalities.

6.12 Inequalities as closing mechanisms

The previous subchapter uses the theory of SAF (Fligstein/McAdam 2011) to present a conceptualisation of the spaces of young activism as described by the interviewees. Most of the interviewees identified a paradox; while they claimed that the field covered an ample ideological, thematic and tactical spectrum many argued that the middle-class academically educated milieus are overrepresent, as opposed to working-class milieus. The statements reveal an idea of class that is not only linked to the individual's and the family's financial and cultural capital, but also to ways of doing things, networks, and taste. The implications that most interviewees attribute to financial and cultural capital, which include taste, ways of doing things and identities, resonate with Bourdieu's argument that

lifestyles are thus the systematic product of habitus, which perceived in their mutual relations through the schemes of the habitus, become sign-systems that are socially qualified (Bourdieu 1984, 172)

In addition, the testimonies suggest an interpretation of financial capital that is close to Bourdieu's; determined by the person, and the family's material income and different form of material conditions.

Cultural capital, interpreted by interviewees as personal (individual) and family volume of institutionalised incorporated cultural capital. Much like Bourdieu in *Distinction* (1984) and *The State Nobility* (1998), interviewees allude to the advantages (for social trajectories in general and for politicisation in particular) of people who enjoy diffuse modes of learning, such as museum visits, travel, attending recitals, intellectual discussions at home, etc. But beyond this, many of the testimonies suggest that interviewees connect financial and (legitimate forms of) cultural capital confer an additional dimension of social credit, or what Bourdieu defined as symbolic capital (Swartz 1997). Interviewees tacitly stressed this when they talked about “academic” and “not-academic” or “people from education-distanced backgrounds” as separated milieus with different forms of capital and social credit. Likewise, interviewees often referred to stigmatisation based on ethnicity, religion, social class, neighbourhood, sexual orientation, and gender. All of these were (to a lesser or greater extent) depicted as traits linked to negative symbolic credit (Swartz 1997, Girling 2004, Bourdieu 2007). While the interviews do not provide nearly enough data to provide an accurate reconstruction, they provide enough data to reconstruct an overview of how they conceive the relationship between capital (s) and lifestyle in general and participation in particular.

The testimonies suggest that capital matters in different ways. Firstly, many interviewees claim that activism requires resources, particularly in the form of know-how, time, but also contacts and some disposable income. Secondly, interviewees alluded to the additional hurdles that youngsters of working-class backgrounds face: less access to networks, more timely pressures. Thirdly, the participants mentioned a further dimension that is derived from resources, in the form of identity, taste, and in the risk of rejection or the chances of harmonising activism with their lives.

As part of the discussion about the lack of diversity in activist groups several interviewees alluded to salient inequalities in society, and to the lack of diversity in professional politics as well. Many like Ms Vural, Mr Schalus, Murad, Deniz and Anja gave testimonies that suggested an assumed homology between fields; assuming that, the SAF of young activism replicates the types of inequalities present in society at large and in fields directly related to activism like the SAF of politics.

For example, about the over-representation of university educated milieus in the SAF of young activism, Mr Schalus argued:

That’s the same discussion in the parliaments... the parliaments (are formed) up to 80% by university educated people but the total population of the federal republic that is 20% so that is not representative of the population³⁹

³⁹ das ist ja dieselbe Diskussion in den Parlamenten (.) die Parlamente besitzen 80 % Akademiker? /I: ja/ aber die bundesrepublikanische Bevölkerung nur 20 % (.) und damit ist das kein Querschnitt mehr der Bevölkerung (.)

Juan: In terms of education, I think many have university education, and migrant backgrounds like two or three and otherwise diverse... not really. I'm the only one getting my grammar school degree now, as an adult, if I can remember correctly⁴⁰

Mr Schalus went on to say that while this can create tensions because of the risk that people don't feel represented but he argued that the situation was not as dire as in other countries. In this vein, Ms Vural made the parallel between what she observed as a male dominance in the RPJ and the (remaining) male dominance in the national parliament.

Ms Vural: (...) there were only young men on the table... the ring of political youth (RPJ)⁴¹

Ms Vural: how can children develop differently than the adults right? I mean they can't be completely different right? I mean they need role models we only have the term *Bundeskanzlerin* since Ms Merkel (...) I mean we have a female chancellor but the parliament is still mostly male (...)⁴²

Ms Vural closed her argument alleging that she was nonetheless hopeful to see that the FFF had mobilised young women in favour of environmentalism. Her statement was an interesting nuance because it implied a difference between some of the more conventional instances of participation, but young women were (in her view) becoming more involved in new instances like the FFF demonstrations. This also goes in line with some of the recent literature that claims that in environmentalism and issue-based activism, young women tend to be more visible than in the conventional spaces (Pfanzelt/Spies 2019, Pickard 2019). In addition to the comparisons to the political field, interviewees referred to forms of societal inequalities which create additional hurdles for the participation of certain milieus

Murad (...) last year there was a big process in Munich about the NSU bomb attacks, this was the culmination of the NSU process. Since then, we have been doing different campaigns about this and we have been, together with our youngsters, giving out flyers about this process, as a strategy of political education. And we had this situation, where some people would stand around for a while and they would say oh sure that is a terrible thing, that is really bad with racism, but all these reactionary forces, these IS supporters, they are also pretty bad. They are also not good. And this really forces us to think: what is this all about? Why is it that when we are talking about racism, about ten dead people, about an attack, people feel the need to talk to us about terrorism, and IS and about how terrible political Islam is? Terror is terror. But why the need to confront us with this, that in Paris so many people were killed in the name of Islam? If we are simply handing out flyers about the NSU? And this happens to us often in this open and tolerant city. Too often in my opinion. And this makes it harder to win over young people for political work. Even if you say, racism is a social problem you can't take racism personally, even if these are personal experiences; and then these youngsters, that you are trying to

⁴⁰ von der Bildungsgang her würd ich sagen a- viele haben studiert? /I: ja/ ich hole jetzt als Einziger glaub ich das Abitur nach /I: m-hm/ wenn ich's richtig im Kopf habe (.) ähm: (.) Migrationshintergrund haben zwei oder drei (.) /I: ok/ und also nicht so viele also divers /

⁴¹ Ms Vural: (...) das waren da hab ich immer nur Männer am Tisch /I: m-hm/ (.) Ring politischer Jugend sind junge Männer (...)

⁴² Vural: Also ich kann das nur bestätigen /I: m-hm/ wobei ich denke wieso sollen die Kinder äh: anders: sich entwickeln wenn die Großen ne? völlig anders also so ticken wie sie halt ticken ne? /I: ja/ das äh: (.) ich meine es braucht ja auch Vorbilder ne? /I: klar/ dass wir: den Begriff Kanzlerin erst seit Frau Merkel haben (.) sagt ja alles aus eigentlich (.) und ich glaube schon dass äh: Mädchen ja auch Vorbilder brauchen (.)

politicise, for whom you are trying to open spaces of participation, they are there and they just say look I don't want to do this. They are all racists out there.

Murad referred to racism several times throughout the interview. In this case, he argued that racism, the form of negative social credit he assumed was attached to his phenotype and ways of doing things (Swartz 2006, Bosay/Arslan 2019) created additional hurdles for participation. He claimed youngsters, confronted with situations like the one above, are demotivated from political activism. Murad's statement speaks to a negative stereotype and to a sense of "otherness" which is felt by people contrasting racist attacks with Islamic attacks. Beyond the experiences of discrimination and how they create a sense of otherness, which makes it harder for youngsters to expose themselves in activist circles, Murad also pointed out the relatively low numbers of politicians with migrant backgrounds in mainstream parties, but he addressed this as an issue of intersectional exclusion because he stressed the hurdle was mostly for those of working-class origin.

But perhaps much more salient than persistent racism or sexism, were financial and cultural inequalities as factors shaping everyday lives; for many interviewees this shaped not only pressures, chances and even spaces occupied in the city. Given that many of the interviewees stressed that the inequalities were palpable in the city's geography, the diagram below represents the "North-South" division many interviewees talked about as they geographically located the spaces of disadvantage

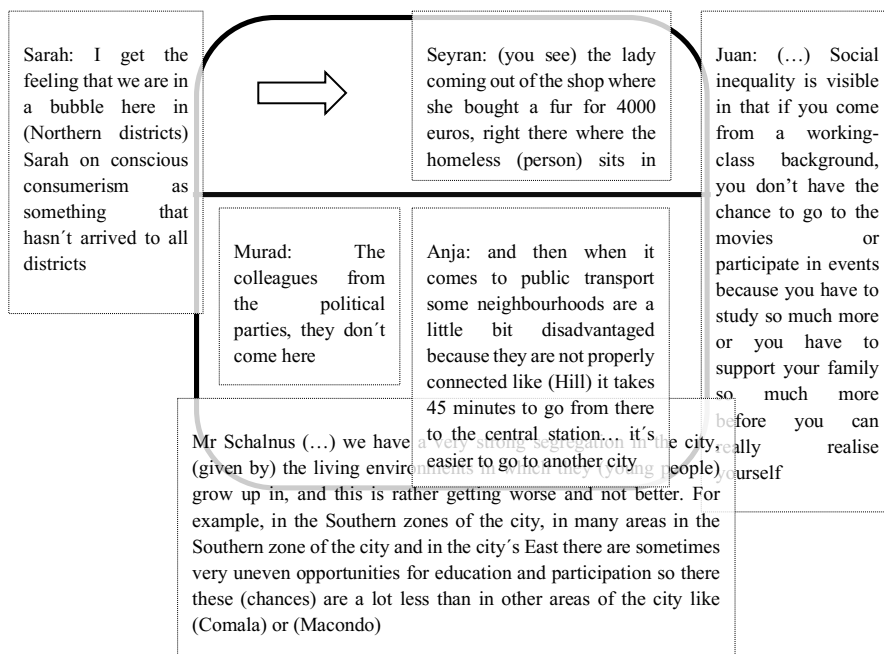


Figure 18 Impressions of the Social Space

The diagram above visually presents the impressions that many interviewees shared about the social spaces, the distribution of capital and how they established a connection with concrete spaces in the city. Naturally, the shape and the thick lines serve only explicatory purposes and do not attempt to reproduce the actual geographical features of the city but rather to visualise a symbolic dimension described by several interviewees, where some areas of the city had significant disadvantages compared to others. Or rather, some spaces of the city were occupied by milieus with greater volumes of capital and the other, the peripheral milieus are occupied by those with lower volumes of capital. Most of the interviewees agree that there are different social groups in the city, which have different volumes of capital and that experience the city differently. Many of them, like Dilek and Seyran who claimed they grew up in poor and stigmatised neighbourhoods in other cities, described these as national dynamics but there was still a local focus in most descriptions; in particular, as many interviewees claimed that different districts offered different chances in education and leisure. Moreover, many of these areas were also stigmatised.

Albeit from different perspectives, Lisa, Phillip, Ludwig, Seyran and Thomas talked about the pressures for urban space; the lack of affordable housing, the disappearance of leisure spaces for young people,

the lack of space for bikes and pedestrians, among others. Furthermore, Marius, Juan and Mr Schlanus specifically talked about the gentrification of many districts and how this contributes to social tensions and to the concentration of disadvantaged groups in marginalised neighbourhoods.

The statements in the diagram present some of the most salient comments regarding inequalities and the social space. Some of these statements point out the differences in education that people can access in the different districts, something which, as many of the interviewees claimed, is also linked to the socio-economic status. Many of them linked cultural and financial capital, to the point that Murad often referred to middle class people using the term “academic”. Moreover, there wasn’t an assumption of an opposition between cultural and financial capital, the interviewees mostly focused on inequalities but the cleavages among those with the highest volumes of capital were not really discussed. Additionally, interviewees connected a socio-economically disadvantaged status to hurdles to leisure and activities, and, by consequence, to any form of engagement and voluntary activity. In sum, the impressions of the social space suggest that interviewees view it as formed by different milieus, and these are made different by their possession of capital. The possession or dispossession of capital is regarded as a factor that shapes possibilities in education, leisure, but also taste and was of doing things. This includes the (dis) possession of financial, cultural and also symbolic capital (or social credit). These impressions, albeit subjective resonate with Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1984, Swartz 1997).

6.13 Capital and the access to the SAF of young activism

Beyond the assumption of a homology of smaller fields reproducing the inequalities in the social space and in the dominant fields, interviewees directly referred to the ways in which capital, but particularly financial and cultural capital (or rather the lack thereof) create additional hurdles for those attempting to enter the SAF of young activism. Besides statements like Juan’s, who pointed at how youngsters of working-class backgrounds are more likely to face additional hurdles not only for political engagement but leisure and self-discovery, others, like Dilek and Murad stressed the ways in which socio-economic differences can create hurdles in the specific case of activism.

Dilek talked about being mindful of the different “life realities” when and if trying to organise a diverse group of activists. She was talking specifically about how peoples of different socio-economic backgrounds have different possibilities of managing their time. Since she has been an independent activist (as well as an intermittent member of the SDS) Dilek talked about some of the hurdles encountered when trying to mobilise young people from working-class backgrounds:

Dilek: I know that at the national level there are some groups that are doing this pretty well but I think that, generally speaking, it is difficult... raising interest is one thing but keeping the

people engaged in the long term that's another thing... that's a different thing because first you have to think about always re-connecting with the people and bringing them back in but at the same time, (you have to watch out) for so different working schedules and life-realities and finances... it's not like people can meet every day at the coffee shop to deliberate but you need a room, so there I think sometimes the resources are missing rooms, money for flyers...⁴³

Dilek's statement refers to financial capital on different dimensions; on the individual dimension, stressing that working youngsters have less disposable income to spend meeting a group at commercial spaces in order to deliberate, but also different schedules and time availability. Beyond this, she mentioned that organising requires (non-commercial) rooms, money for flyers, which can be hard to obtain for new emerging groups that lack support of broader and more established organisations. This reminds of her experience with the Group for Peoples of Colour which ultimately failed, partly due to the lack of resources. Dilek also used her own experience as a working student to exemplify how sustained activism can have additional costs for working-class youngsters, as she mentioned that balancing work, studies, and a sustained activism had not been easy and came at a cost for her

Dilek: Well, I have been a student for a few years now and I got my Bachelors here at the university and now I am doing my Masters in the same subjects, with German philology as my main subject. I also work and I have been politically active for a long time, which is why my studies have taken longer... so that's the big picture⁴⁴

This was one of her introductory statements when we first met, and something that she stressed the second time as well: she had been studying for a long time and that it was sometimes difficult to coordinate everything. Dilek was certainly not the only one who mentioned the time pressures as a significant hurdle to sustained activism, but her experience does somewhat contrast with Lisa's and Anna's, both of whom received financial support from their parents for their activism (Lisa so that she didn't have to work during her first studies and had time to be in the JUSOS and Anna recalls getting donations from some of the parents of the people in her eco-path).

Aside from having less time available and less disposable income, interviewees identified another factor that makes activism harder for working-class youngsters. Murad, for instance, told me that mobilising the people in his organisation for the FFF protests was difficult; and this was, partly because some of the organisation's members felt distanced from the subject (as he later explained, they also wanted to

⁴³Dilek: ich weiß also auch so bundesweit dass das Gruppen gibt die das sehr gut hinkriegen aber ich glaube das ist schon allgemein sehr schwierig also auch so Interesse zu wecken ist ja eine /I: mhm/ Sache aber die Leute auch dazu zu bringen langfristig da zu sein /I: jaja/ ist ja auch nochmal eine andere Sache weil erstens man muss halt so ein bisschen drauf achten sie immer wieder einzubringen /I: ja/ äh aber zeitgleich auf so unterschiedliche auch Arbeitszeiten und so weiter einzugehen /I: ja/ Lebensrealitäten Finanzen also das ist dann halt nicht so dass man sich irgendwie äh jeden Tag irgendwie im Café treffen kann um miteinander zu diskutieren /I: ja/ sondern da braucht es irgendwie einen Raum /I: jajaja/ ähm das also ich glaube so dass mehr so die Ressourcen die dann einem fehlen ähm also Räume äh (3) ähm (2) Gelder um Flyer zu drucken /

⁴⁴Mh also ich bin Studentin schon seit einigen Jahren ähm ich habe meinen Bachelor auch hier an der Universität äh abgeschlossen ähm studiere jetzt im Master dieselben Fächer mhm also als Hauptfach Germanistik /I: mhm/ genau u.:nd gehe nebenbei viel Arbeiten äh habe lange Zeit halt politisch viel gemacht deshalb sich auch mein Studium sehr in die Länge gezogen hat ähm genau so das Größte (00:54)

show solidarity with workers who are at risk of losing their jobs and felt closer to this cause) but also partly because the cost of attending might be higher for them

Murad: they come from financially vulnerable families, and we have some who are getting their grammar school certificates so they can't go without their classes they don't have the money for learning support teachers they don't have it... and they don't come from academically educated families and they can get help from their parents so for them it's harder to miss school on Fridays... and then the people who have certain grade point averages and have these academic backgrounds, they haven't environmental awareness in their families, their parents are also interested and so they can turn a blind eye if you say this is an important issue, then you can strike and miss school and many parents even come with their kids and you notice, when you talk to the parents, what kind of background they have, the kind of jobs they have, these are usually parents who also come from the environmental movement themselves but in our case, these are working-class kids so they (the parents) say no, what's going to happen with you? You must take school seriously, you can't miss school⁴⁵.

Murad had a nuanced view since he admitted that people in his organisation do have different (more material) priorities, he also stressed that when they printed their paper's issue about environmentalism, the reception was good, and the youngsters in the organisation and in the neighbourhood were interested in learning more about the subject. In spite of what he considers to be a growing interest and the fact that MLY has joined the FFF network and mobilised people for the protests, Murad sustained that the family background can create directly or indirectly hurdles for sustained participation: partly, because joining protests and spending time can come at a higher cost (or risk) and partly because they also risk rejection and confrontation from their parents. Ultimately, his testimony refers to a greater hurdle because of the lack of role models, but also a lack of emotional, financial, or academic support to compensate for the time spent.

In addition to this, he mentioned how some of those who started attending the FFF protests thought they should also support the workers of a nearby company which announced it will start reducing its staff. As a result, they did join the FFF protests but they also sent a letter expressing their support to the workers of this company. At a different point, Murad mentioned that they wanted to mobilise a group to support the Hambach Forest protests, but this was difficult because many of the youngsters identified with the RWE workers and felt uneasy about demonstrating if it meant that the workers could be at risk.

⁴⁵ die kommen aus finanziell schwachen Familien (.) /I: m-hm/ und auch wir haben auch Jugendliche die machen auch ihr Abi Abi (?momentan?) (.) und die: können dann auf ihren Stoff nicht verzichten (.) die haben das Geld nicht für Nachhilfelehrer die haben nicht das: äh: /I: ja ja/ die haben nicht die die: Chance dass sie aus einer akademischen Familie kommen und ihre Eltern helfen hier /I: m-hm/ äh: helfen denen äh bei ihrem Stoff (.) und für die ist es nochmal umso schwieriger /I: ja/ äh: freitags nicht zur Schule zu gehen (.) also das spielt auch nochmal mit mit z- mit darein (.) und (.) Leute halt die n bestimmten Notendurchschnitt haben die aus Akademikerfamilie kommen die haben nochmal n ganz anderes Bewusstsein auch (.) für das Thema Umwelt haben (.) deren Eltern gehen auch an das an das äh: Thema auch ganz an- anders ran (.) die: drücken mal n Auge zu dass sie sagen wenn du sagst dass das n wichtiges Thema (.) dann kannst du die Schule bestreiken es kommen ja sogar auch viele Eltern mit ihren Kids auch dann dahin (.) /I: ja ja ja/ und man sieht dann auch also wenn man sich auch mit den Eltern unterhält auch von welcher: Schicht sie kommen: was für's Beruf sie machen (.) das sind dann auch meistens dann auch Eltern die kommen dann auch von der: ökologischen Bewegung von der Umweltbewegung (.) /I: ja/ die ihre Kids da ähm: unterstützen (.) und bei uns sind das dann Leute halt (.) äh: die sind klassische Arbeiter (.) ne? [00:40:20] und die: sagen dann nee ich [Tischklopfen] will das aus was dir was wird's ne? /I: ja ja klar/ ma- ma- ma- mein Kind deswegen musst du äh: die Schule ernst nehmen und darfst die Schule nicht bestreiken (.) also auch ne auch'n Bewusstsein ist da.

In that sense, the financial inequality creates hurdles in the form of reduced support and higher cost of participation for some, as well as an identity hurdle; some of the working-class youngsters don't identify with certain social movements.

Dilek and Murad's statements illustrate different mechanisms through which financial inequality functions as a closing mechanism to the SAF. Perhaps one of the clearest closing mechanisms of the SAF is the possession of certain forms of cultural capital, often expressed in the form of different language barriers. Many interviewees associated ways of speaking to forms of cultural capital closer to the middle class educated milieu. The differences in cultural capital were often expressed as *linguistic barriers* in different forms.

6.14 Linguistic Barriers

One of the instances where many of the interviewees seemed to assume a homology between fields (Bourdieu 1984) was in the realm of language. In line with the findings of the study *Sprichst du Politik* (Arnold et al 2011) that presented evidence of language as factor of disconnection between youngsters and politics, some of the interviewees alluded to the "kind of university language" used in political discussions, mentioning, firstly, parliamentary discussions as a way of saying that this is something that is replicated in spaces of activism and ultimately serves as a closing mechanism. Something Juan told me when he was telling me about his start with JEF summarises this "of course I speak German, but..." and by this he was referring to the hurdles he faced at the beginning because it felt like a different language. In a nutshell, interviews reveal different forms of language barriers all of which reveal forms of context-relevant, or highly valued cultural capital and a form of belonging (to the group or to certain milieu). These will be hereby separately elaborated but are in the testimonies not so clearly detached from one another.

Intellectual language vs. language of life This is abstract and intellectual language: what they often associated with going to university or to grammar schools. In other words, this has to do with specific forms of cultural capital which are preferred in or linked to the discourses of politics and activism. understanding internal organisational jargon and how things work and what things mean.

Using (or not) politically correct language: Seyran questions the relevance and the role of labels such as LGTBQ within a labour context and asks whether this is something relevant within the labour context. For this he was scolded.

6.14.1 Using the “correct” register and language; “I can bring out the Abi-Slang” (Seyran)

Parting from an assumed homology between fields, many interviewees claimed that the language of political debates (in general) is complicated and abstract which can, in many cases deter certain segments of young people from following them. Some interviewees assumed that the SAF of young activism tends to replicate the use of this abstract language. The use of a complex, academic, and sometimes encrypted language is an important hurdle to overcome for those who are entering the field of activism; being able to understand and to communicate in this correct language includes

Albeit some case-specific nuances, most of the interviewees associated political discussions and people involved therein (more specifically, hegemonic political discussions) with a language that is perceived as difficult, academic, and distant from everyday life. The interviews suggest that being acquainted with this kind of language, and “feeling at home” in these kinds of discussions are regarded as a sign of a person having the appropriate and recognised cultural capital, usually having attended a grammar school and/or having a university degree. The competence with the technical terms of some political discussions and the willingness to enter and take part in complex and abstract discussions are regarded as traits that mark a distinction between those who are inside the field of politics or activism and those who are not.

Because he identified IGMJ’s regional leadership and the new trainees at the local level as belonging to different social groups, Seyran developed a strategy to best communicate with each group. This strategy was to switch registers depending on the group he needed to address; he called this his *ghetto slang* and his *Abi slang*. By admitting that he consciously switches between what his two linguistic registers, he acknowledged a distance between social groups and between life-worlds. He sees the union’s directives as part of the university educated (or “academic”) audiences that he needs to address with a more careful language, and he sees the new trainees as part of the “non-academic” audiences that he knows from his upbringing. The fact that he describes himself this way, being able to oscillate between both worlds, resonates with the “split-habitus” that research about migrant students has identified (Arslan 2018).

Yeah, I do try to (make it easier) in particular because I come from a “humble background”? I mean we grew up in a high storey building mmm I try to adjust. If I have a group full of (university) students or dual-students (in our case) () then I adjust my language and speak a little bit “higher” (nicer) because by now I have my Leave Certificate (Abitur), then I try to express myself in a nobler manner and when I know that we are getting a group of trainees from (Company), all of whom have the basic leave certificate (Hauptschule) and simply want to do a traineeship and work their entire lives by the production line and that is all they want. They want to work their entire lives in this production line and get their money and then at night come home to (their) wife and family... there my tone... it changes. I look at the kind of group in front of me and ask: how do I reach out to this crowd? So, either I bring out the *ghetto-slang* or I bring out the *Abi-slang*?

The decision to adapt to the language of the ‘nobler audiences’ suggests a recognition of this proper and legitimate ways of speaking; a recognition of the hierarchies (the noble, or the higher forms of speech as more educated than the common) and the structure of a symbolic order (see: Yildiz 2016, Bourdieu

1991) that values specific forms of speech over others. Moreover, Seyran attempts to appear relatable for both audiences. In his case, the linguistic distance was two-fold: on the one hand, it had to do with the school-form (the trainees who got the basic leave certificate in contrast to the dual students and university students who have the grammar school certificates) but this distance has to do with the milieu and upbringing. As he opposed “ghetto-slang” with “Abi-slang” he associated the Abi-slang not only to people who possess a specific form of institutionalised cultural capital, but to people who do not belong to the ghetto, people who are closer to the middle classes.

Seyran’s testimony suggests that he acknowledged the existence of institutionalised forms of cultural capital which facilitate the entry into specific groups, and that he recognises the existence of certain dominant and legitimate ways of communicating, even within the context of the union. Furthermore, his comments suggest that having obtained this specific form of institutionalised cultural capital (namely his advanced leave certificate) supports his own self-classification as someone with the competence to address what he considers “the nobler audiences”. On the other hand, when he stressed that he was able to address the working-class trainees and claims to understand their aspirations and mentality, he is reclaiming some legitimacy and value for the kind of non-institutionalised (or rather less valued) embodied cultural capital that he has, thanks to his social background.

The movement between two slang forms represented his oscillation between his primary and secondary habitus. In this line, Seyran’s comments have a lot to do with milieu and social origin: it is not just about speaking the ‘official’ language, but also of speaking the correct form of German, with the correct idiomatic expressions, pronunciation and accent that evidence belonging to a certain (middle-class, academic, native) milieu, which is dominant in the field of activism, and at the organisation itself.

Seyran wasn’t the only one who associated the formal language of activist groups with middle-class, educated milieus. The distance that these speech forms create are also identified by Dilek, Murad, Anja among other interviewees. Murad, for instance, highlights that as a German of Turkish descent, he is perceived differently, and he has a different cultural background than those of the people in the political parties. While he does recognise the kind of closure mechanism that cultural capital becomes, he still frames his background as an advantage: he argues that these traits make him more competent in addressing working-class youngsters than people who are engaged in more established organisations.

Murad: We have to go back to doing our work with the workers, but then cultural aspects play a role there, and how you appear in front of youngsters. So there’s a difference if you are trying to do political work here in this district. I have a migrant background, so I look different and I have a different way of speaking and a different cultural background. I know how you have to talk to these youngsters. I know how to talk to these people. My colleagues who have no migrant background, those from different parties they have it more difficult, (talking to young

migrants) ... we live in a society where there are racist experiences and where we know experiences of structural discrimination⁴⁶

Just like Seyran, Murad claims value and legitimacy for the kind of social and cultural capital that he brings into the field of activism. He is recognising some commonality with the people engaged in political parties and more conventional instances of participation, in that he speaks of “my colleagues”. For him, his lived experience as German of Turkish descent and the interaction with working-class people and people of migrant descent have granted him an embodied cultural capital that is visible in the ways of expression (Bourdieu 1984, Wacquant 2014, Hallet 2007). This embodied cultural capital gives him a different understanding of societal cleavages and a more effective approach to communicating with his specific milieu (working-class youngsters of migrant descent) than those in the conventional instances of participation and who possess the highly valued forms of institutionalised cultural capital. In that sense, Murad and Seyran’s stories suggest that the ways in which many of the political and activist actor communicate is. These two testimonies are therefore, not simply reaffirming what has been repeatedly stated by the social science literature, namely, the over-representation of the highly educated milieus in the different instances of activism and other instances of participation (Parkin 1968, Pickard 2019, Spanring et al 2008, Dalton 2017, Henn/Sloam 2018, Busse et al 2015), but also they are stressing a claim for the recognition and the visibility of other non-institutionalised, or less recognised forms of cultural capital as relevant in the realm of activism.

Dilek experienced the dominance of this so-called academic language when she first entered the university and joined the SDS. Her testimony also reveals an assumption that the language of politics and of many activist groups is an “academic” or “complex language” which is sensed as distant from their working-class migrant milieu. Much like Seyran, Dilek also described herself as coming from a poor background and when we talked about her childhood and early days, she mentioned she was born and raised in a highly stigmatised and marginalised district in a major German city. She talked about her first encounters with a campus left party faction as somewhat of a shock experience:

I looked around at the university groups and faced initially a great linguistic barrier because I couldn't deal with all the terms that (are used) particularly in the left-wing spectrum

This linguistic barrier was in fact a distance in cultural capital. She was disappointed to realise that she didn't really follow the discussions and that the participants used a lot of ‘complex and very technical’

⁴⁶ Murad: wir müssen wieder unter den Arbeitern äh: (.) unsere unsere Arbeit machen (.) aber dann wiederum hat man halt äh: spielen als kulturelle Faktoren spielen da: ne ne Rolle (.) /I: m-hm/ die Sprache spielt ne Rolle wie tritt man auf bei den Jugendlichen? /I: ok/ also ist nochmal n Unterschied wenn man hier im im Stadtteil ist und versucht politische Arbeit zu machen (.) ich hab Migrationshintergrund (.) /I: ja/ also ich sehe anders aus (.) ich hab n anderen: Stil zu reden (.) ich hab n anderen äh: kulturellen äh: Hintergrund (.) ich weiß wie man mit diesen Jugendlichen zu sprechen hat (.) /I: m-hm/ wie man äh: wie man diese Leute anspricht (.) und äh: meine (.) Kollegen als die kein Migrationshintergrund haben von verschiedenen Parteien oder anderen etablierten Verbänden (.) die haben's halt schwieriger als (.) und wir leben ich habe ganz am Anfang auch gesagt wir leben in einer in einer Gesellschaft (.) wo man äh: Rassismuserfahrung hat (.) wo man strukturelle Diskriminierung kennt (.)

expressions and showed no interest in bringing other people in. Even though she had been interested in political issues such as racism and inequality during her adolescence, she felt like she was missing a very context specific cultural capital.

Dilek's first experience with the university group suggests a strong differentiation between the external and internal; the members of the group could understand and follow the complex and theoretical discussions, and the newcomers (or least Dilek) couldn't. She went on to tell me that after that experience she spent some time as an independent activist, during which she also became better acquainted with the theoretical aspects of these discussion. Interestingly, even though she had a very autonomous politicisation, she links her advancement in theoretical subjects to her ability to deliberate in the group and become able to articulate her thoughts politically. Dilek experiences this dynamic and this language as unwelcoming, and even now, continues to see it as a hurdle when it comes to mobilising youngsters for political causes. Beyond the intelligibility of specific language forms, Dilek stresses how some forms of qualifications create differentiated self-perceptions

"I think it has a lot to do with the constitution of the groups, so I know there are groups that are mostly university-based and tried to attract new people from outside the university which didn't work at all (...) And I know that for many youngsters it is really hard if they know ok, there's like 15 university students there and I am the only one who didn't go to university and I am doing like a traineeship at (Aldi) so I don't have any further future perspectives beyond working as a clerk at (Aldi) ... (I know) they face a great hurdle to even go there.

The academic vs. non-academic trope, is in essence, connected to specific forms of institutionalised cultural capital which have a concrete dimension but also a symbolic aspect that has to do with identity, self- and external perception; those who are not academic (no university education, and no connection with the university networks) have less access to important networks and spaces of political socialisation and mobilisation, but also they face an additional hurdle when it comes to establishing a connection and a shared identity with the activist groups; partly because they don't feel comfortable with these ways of speaking, but partly because they perceive themselves differently.

Dilek's analyses are not exclusively resource-centred but they also hint at an important symbolic aspect that makes it difficult for working-class youngsters to feel that they belong, and that they have the necessary competence to join political groups dominated by university students. When she talks about the "elitist language" some groups use, she refers to ways of speaking that are associated with an incorporated cultural capital derived from higher education, but also, with socially recognisable credentials that confer this given authority.

Dilek, Murad and Seyran were not alone in pointing at the language gaps in activist circles. On the side of the local stakeholders, Anja specifically mentioned the influence of the differentiated school system on youth activism or even political interest

Anja: well, I can't really talk about the actual willingness, but I simply notice that there are different groups of people (that we have in this city) that you simply cannot find within the spectrum of organisations and groups where one could engage and participate. And these (groups of people) are, as I mentioned earlier, mostly youngsters from the least educated circles. The question is if they are simply not so easily reached? Maybe the advertisement/ adds/ information (for these milieus) are incorrect or insufficient? Or maybe there is not enough being done? I can't really say much when it comes to personal motivation or demotivation.

Interestingly, Anja acknowledges much of what Seyran and Murad said; that milieus have different ways of communicating and this has a lot to do with the forms of capital they possess. Echoing some of the other interviewees, she stresses that the people who have lower educational levels tend to be less represented within the organisations (at least the ones she is in contact with) and that these people need to be addressed, sought and invited differently than the highly educated who dominate the spaces of activism. This assumption that “they are not being addressed properly” echoes some of Seyran’s and Murad’s statements when they claimed that they knew how to talk to working-class youngsters. Still, Anja abstains from judging whether those milieus that are underrepresented in activism are indeed motivated (or not) whereas Murad and Dilek argue that these “unreachable youngsters” do have political and societal concerns; that they care about racism, about housing, employment, city planning, even if they are not able to articulate their concerns with the commonly accepted codes and access the legitimate spaces of deliberation.

I: So, do you think it is necessary to improve the participation of young people in social and political activities here in the city?

Anja: Yes, exactly, especially I realise that it is very difficult at the structural level because the administrative processes take a very long time and so young people are not young for so long. This might have to do with the city, because it is a big city. But in general, the bureaucracy that we have here, in Germany which, especially for young people who don't have a very high level of education can be difficult to understand, starting with the language. The processes are difficult to understand (for youngsters) and there are no real efforts being made in order to simplify them. And this is a structural matter.

Anja insists on the perceived distance set by the hierarchic structure of the education system; the idea that political discussions and processes are complicated and thus unwelcoming for people with less cultural capital. Once again, her statement echoes those of other interviewees in that she stresses the perceived connection between attending a grammar school (Gymnasium) and being willing (and able) to follow and participate in political processes, whether it is in the more structured organisations or in the more horizontal and unstructured networks like FFF. As she adds that it is mostly the grammar school pupils who feel addressed (or invited) by demonstrations like FFF she is, once again, implying a difference in the ways in which youngsters are to be spoken, according to their cultural capital and their position in the social space in general.

6.14.1.1 The Deciphering the organisational jargon: It's like a language of its own (Lisa JUSOS)

Dilek wasn't the only one who experienced this (perceived or real) distance in cultural capital when she first joined an organisation. Lisa describes a similar experience when she joined the JUSOS: "At the beginning I said nothing, I just listened, and I thought the others knew a whole lot and I knew nothing" she claimed. Besides the fact that she wasn't acquainted with organisational procedures, she also admits that she found somewhat of a linguistic barrier:

I: did you maybe face some kind of hurdle at the beginning?

Lisa: Definitely. There are so many abbreviations and so many specific ways of doing things, like how to bring in a proposal and so on. And then you have something like GO (German initials) which means Rules of Procedure and then you can draft a "Proposal for Rules of Procedure" and then there are different hand gestures that you can use (I don't even think about these anymore) but at the beginning that did confuse me (to see) all of a sudden people are raising their hands in the air and everyone stopped talking and I had no idea what was happening. By the way there are (in her old city and in her current city as well) seminars for new members where we have lists with all the abbreviations so people can read this and see oh there is a UBDK (German initials) that is the district- representative meeting. So, we hand out these things at the beginning so that everyone can understand because it is really like a language of its own.

Lisa's initial experience evidenced the distance between the insiders, who had already naturalised and incorporated this 'language of its own' and this way of doing things and how she has gone from being outside to being part of the insiders, who have incorporated these ways of communicating and of doing things. Besides the above cited organisational efforts to deal with these linguistic hurdles, Lisa also mentions that she knew people inside the JUSOS who helped her become acquainted with the organisational jargon. She claimed she started attending the meetings because one of her friends was a party member, and she remembers how she was supported at the beginning. Lisa's testimony suggests that her conflict was more with the organisation's internal jargon and not necessarily with perceived 'academic or very theoretical language' and she doesn't connect this with her own social origin or academic background; opposite to Dilek, she didn't feel like the odd one out.

These testimonies reveal a tacit recognition of the specific practices, languages and strategies of those involved in the field of activism. Albeit with porous and unclear boundaries, the field insiders can nonetheless show the difference between being inside and being outside: that is the main commonality between Lisa's and Dilek's experiences. Moreover, what Murad and Seyran's testimonies reveal is a consensual recognition of a specific social and symbolic order in which people with different academic qualifications (Real or Hauptschule) are at a disadvantage, as are people of migrant descent. The fact that Seyran and Murad recognise themselves as 'different' at least from the conventional (or dominant)

actors in the field of activism because of their conditions as migrants and because of the kind of academic qualifications they have.

6.14.1.2 It gets picky, academic: Seyran and political (in) correctness

Even though he claims to have developed a specific competence to effectively communicate with the union's leadership Seyran still finds that people in the managing positions of the union, are too academic, and that they can be inflexible when it comes to the "correct" ways of communicating within the context of the union. During our interview, he told me he had a bad encounter with some of the other members of the union because he said he didn't care for the LGTBQ labels, given that, in his view, this is no relevant in the context of the union and they are supposed to represent workers, regardless of their identities. He claimed the accusation was unfounded

Why do we need to pack this huge group of people (in one box) I mean I have gay friends and lesbians and bisexual and pansexual here at the local committee and they see this like me: why do I need this label? This is nothing other than just packing people in one box. And then this guy (from the state youth committee) just called me a homophobe. "Don't be such a homophobe" and I am thinking sorry? Do you see the paradox?

The discrepancy with the union leadership over the relevance of the LGTBQI label within union's context, and the fact that he was scolded and called a homophobe reveal that the union still has a dominant circle which is (according to his description) predominantly "academic" and these are the people who tend to impose the codes and the correct ways of speaking and naming within the context of the union. The direct (and public) scolding and even the label "homophobe" was an exercise of symbolic violence by those who stand in more comfortable positions and who dominate the power of framing and definition. His testimony also suggests that even though he now has his advanced leave certificate, and he sees this as a qualification that enables him to properly address these academic circles, he doesn't perceive himself as part of those he calls 'academic' and he still perceives a symbolic distance between himself and the union's leadership.

This (sexual identity and sexual orientation) is really irrelevant, in the context of a worker's union. I just couldn't understand this. And there it gets really academic (at these level) there it gets picky. As we talked about this incident, I asked him whether or not he thinks this kind of accusation and this strict use of language could demotivate some people, and he claimed it was something that affected him

Seyran: Definitely. I mean I was about to tell (not Josef but the other guy, the one above him) that I wasn't going to attend these committees anymore. So, he told me "well if you don't go, no one else is going to go so please think about this" And so I did go back.

Being scolded and accused of homophobia revealed the distance between him and those who sit on the board at the regional level. While he admitted being affected by this, he also stressed that by the time it happened he already had strong links in the union, in particular at the very local level. The memory of

this situation reveals not only that he sees the regional directives of IGMJ as belonging to a different milieu, but also that he sees them as unjustly taking the right to determine what the correct ways of expression are. Lastly, it unveils a general line of tension within left-leaning circles between the classical concerns about workers and salaries and the concerns with identity and symbolic issues.

6.15 The power of definition

The power to define (discourses, situations, etc.) is an expression of symbolic power because it sets the boundaries of acceptable and correct strategies, interpretations, languages etc. (Swartz 1997) The power of definition is expressed in two common tropes throughout these interviews; on the one hand, the trope of the language distance, which was an expression of different forms of incorporated cultural capital, and on the other hand, on the symbolic power to define and frame political debates, as well as the correct and appropriate codes and channels of deliberation. These factors, the language that is closely associated to certain forms of institutionalised cultural capital but more important to certain social milieus, and the definition of appropriate and relevant debates and mechanisms to engage politically, could act as closing mechanisms. Partly, because, as many of the interviewees claimed, some youngsters don't feel addressed and don't feel welcome. Partly, as other claimed, because some of the institutionalised actors, frame political discussions not only using an intellectual language, but from a mostly structural perspective that makes no connection with people's lives. As we were talking about the repertoires of action used by MLY Murad told me they make podcasts and publish their own political magazine. Following this, I asked him whether having young people write the articles was helpful in getting other youngsters interested

Murad: definitely. I mean politics, if you say politics, you overwhelm a lot of people... politics are the thing of parties and the thing of the "big people"⁴⁷

He went on to explain how many youngsters hear politics and directly say "that's not our thing" and how they combine different topics in this newspaper, partly reflecting their extended definition of politics; they include classical topics like the crisis in the care sector, housing crisis, racism, inequality, war, and peace, but also, sports, book reviews and culture. He claimed that access to culture was also participation and, in fact, also a political matter. The idea that many youngsters are overwhelmed when they hear politics and assume that this is something distant is linked to a very hegemonic definition of politics (Manning 2010) which makes a clear separation between the private and the public but in this particular case it reveals a difference in milieu, since the working-class youngsters see themselves as

⁴⁷ Murad: ja definitiv (.) auf auf auf jeden Fall (.) also Politik ist mal wenn man Politik sagt dann dann erschlägt man viele Leute (.) Politik Politik ist ne Sache der der der Parteien (.) /I: m-hm/ Politik ist die: Sache der großen Leute (.)

distinct from those who are supposed to be the ones involved in political discussions. Furthermore, this comes close to the criticisms that Seyran and Juan expressed when they claimed that politics, as often presented by schools, “had little to do with people’s lives”.

Deniz argues that the distance that decision-makers take from youth and their pleas can ultimately demotivate; he claims that even if there are numerous official instances of participation, youth participation and participation of non-dominant factions is desired up to a certain point

Deniz: Sure, there are particular needs of young people that we as adults don’t really take seriously and this starts with very minor things, when we consider participation and it’s about giving young people a voice and their rights... how seriously is this taken by adults. The FFF is a good example. Millions of youngsters went to the streets (...) it is interesting to see what the adults do (...) young people are heard and we take this seriously, but this stops at a given point.... Whenever you have to make decisions and face consequences (...) giving up power is in itself a form of power... do I want to split the cake?

Throughout the interview, Deniz repeatedly mentioned the example of the FFF protests; he argued that young generations had been widely criticised for their apathetic attitude but once they massively mobilise demanding something concrete, these actions and their understanding of the situation are questioned by politicians. Besides this, he extensively talked about how many of the young partisan groups reproducing dynamics of exclusion for certain social milieus. As a former member of the Green party youth, and someone who has worked with the city’s and the federal state’s departments for integration and youth, Deniz has a perspective of participation that is strongly (but not exclusively, as the FFF example shows) focused on the institutionalised instances (those tending towards professionalism and reproduction). Nonetheless, he mentions that the closing mechanisms created by different forms of capital and that these are not only visible in the youth-wings of political parties but also in some of the environmental organisations and NGOs. In his view, the problem is that dominant groups have “defined the game” and this can keep many other out, or at least as minorities. For his statement, the fact that some groups have the power to define and shape the debates and the mechanisms of participation means that participation can only to a certain point because changing this would imply giving up power and entering new discussions

Deniz: It’s once again the thing with the cake... its split and then you have people coming from left and right and from above and below and they all want to (...) participate and they no longer want to sit in “kids’ table” and get the crumbs but they want to decide what kind of cake that should be... so I don’t want this black forest cherry cake but I want... I don’t know a carrot cake (...) and that’s the problem, and no one says that openly and many struggle because they know that this has consequences⁴⁸

48 Deniz: das ist wieder das (.) Thema mit dem Kuchen? /I: ja/ der ist ja aufgeteilt (.) und jetzt kommen auch noch die von rechts und die von links und von oben von unten und die wollen alle (...) Mitmachen und die wollen nicht mehr am (.) äh: kleinen Katzentisch sitzen? und nur noch die Krümel haben sondern: äh: die wollen mitbestimmen und die wollen äh: sogar (.) ein Stück davon haben also die wollen sogar (.) mitbestimmen welcher Kuchen das sein soll nicht nur (.) den Kuchen (?da den

Many of the interviewees strongly criticised schools as spaces of political education and claimed that some of the hegemonic politics taught there don't really connect to people's lives and, therefore, don't really trigger the motivation to participate. Seyran and Juan both claimed that the situation was different at their schools; Seyran initially attended the Basic School and Juan went to a special school. While Mr Schalnus claimed that, the pupils who don't attend the grammar schools are usually more pragmatic and hence have less interest in intellectual and political discussions, Juan and Seyran think that these schools were not giving enough input to motivate pupils.

The criticism is directed towards the actors who have (traditionally) had the power to define politics and frame the debates; there is a criticism towards the ways in which institutionalised actors, like schools, present politics and what they frame as political. The general complaint was that the emphasis on structural and theoretical aspects of politics was usually in detriment of the connection between politics and their own lives. In that sense, they claimed many people easily lose interest since they don't feel addressed by this kind of narrative. The impressions that politics (as presented and framed by some of the dominant actors in the field of politics and media) are distant, abstract, unappealing, resonate with some of the findings about youth politicisation and youth interest in politics; Manning (2010: 59) cites some recent publications that acknowledge how the conception of the apathetic youth and the uninformed youth is often based on "hegemonic ideas of politics". Moreover, Manning (2010) argues that the conception of the political as part of the public domain, as opposed to the spaces of everyday life (which are part of the private domain)

Stück?) sondern: ich möchte da: keine Ahnung (.) das soll ein Karottenkuchen sein (.) ich möchte kein Schwarzwälder Kirsch (.) so (.) und das (.) ist das große Problem und da: äh: (.) das sagt keine offen? /I: m-hm/ aber sträuben sich natürlich viele weil die wissen was das für Konsequenzen auch hat (.) [00:48:37]

6.16 Conclusions

This chapter engaged in two main tasks: first, presenting an analytical reconstruction of the spaces of young activism with its borders, actors and dynamics, and second, presenting the analytical reconstruction of the closing mechanisms. The spaces of local young activism were presented using the concept of SAF (Fligstein/Mc Adam 2012, 2011) which conceive these meso-orders as “Russian-Dolls-alike” spaces that are embedded in larger SAFs and, at the same time, made up of smaller SAFs. This approach has a strong interactionist component and thus understands SAF as a field more defined by the subjective postures and which can also be contingent was best described by Fligstein and McAdam’s concept of SAF.

The analysis presents a SAF with porous borders and significant overlaps with the field of (general, non-juvenile) activism and by the field of politics. In fact, the SAF as it can be reconstructed based on the testimonies, is contingent, open, and has flexible and unclear borders. Partly because of the intersections with other fields, like the field of activism in general and the field of politics, partly because it is crossed by different movements and smaller fields. But there is nonetheless a recognition of being “inside” and there are commonly recognised ideas (not commonly accepted, but merely recognised) about the existing issues of debates and the different ideological and tactical profiles represented in this SAF.

The SAF has porous borders, but the data allows for a conceptualisation of this SAF within generational, geographic (the city) and tactical borders. The generational dimension is given by the recognition of generational concerns and instances, even if these were strongly shaped by class, gender and education. The local dimension is given by the description of city-specific problematics and the references of their activism within local communities of action.

The diversity that characterises the field is neither random nor arbitrary, but it rather connects with much of the social science literature that has studied the changing (and contending) patterns of participation: participation within the conventional means and with an underlying link to sustaining representative democracy or participation through diverse and sometimes confrontational (or artistic, personalised) repertoires of action that seeks to exercise counter-power or to yield societal change from below (Tilly/Tarrow 2015, Spannring et al 2008, Dalton 2017, Norris 2002, Gaiser 2010, Pickard 2019). These differences are presented within two axes that define this SAF: contentious- reproduction and professional- spontaneous. The different positions represent different profiles and understandings of activism, as well as different organisational forms.

Young participation was conceived by most interviewees as something desirable yet not so easily attainable. Even if they recognised that sustained activism is rather uncommon, most interviewees agreed that those who are part of this minority tend to have homogenous backgrounds. This presents a salient paradox in the data: while there is a shared idea of the city as particularly open and amicable for

young participation, and this being a desirable goal, the access to the spaces of participation was not easy. Even more, this suggests that even a SAF that is conceived as having porous and vague borders, being not-fully established and overlapped by other fields, is recognised as having an in-outside and as having some forms of closing mechanism.

The closing mechanisms are the (dis) possession of cultural, financial and symbolic capital, which grant (or deny) the ability and the social credit of being recognised as politically competent (Bourdieu 1984) and thus, entering and feeling at home within the instances of participation. Similarly, the power to define the field, and to define the legitimate and illegitimate languages, ideas and ways of speaking is a form of symbolic power which is monopolised by dominant milieus. This power to define, which frames political discussions within specific topics, actions, spaces (often discussion related to electoral politics, parliaments, etc) and with specific ways of speaking and spaces of encounter can act as a mechanism of closure. When Murad talks about the fact that the partisan groups don't go to his neighbourhood, he alludes to the dynamic in which these (regarded by most interviewees as privileged groups within the SAF) groups monopolise not only languages and forms of deliberation but also the geographic spaces in which participation actually takes place.

Regarding the power to define, some of the interviewees alluded (directly or indirectly) to the ways in which state SAFs shape and define the themes and languages of politics and the acceptable and desirable forms and spaces for young activism; the strong criticism towards the structural and hegemonic vision of politics that is transmitted in schools (Manning 2010) as well as Ms Vural 's job of monitoring "radical" forms of politicisation and Suzanne's anecdotes about the HF protests are illustrative examples.

Naturally, the data also reveals counter- discourses and actions of reverse- counter symbolic power (Swartz 1997) in the efforts made by the activists to question and redefine consumerist norms, in their efforts to offer political education, and to shape the discussions in their own words.

7 Chapter II

This chapter concentrates predominantly on the trajectories and development of the activist habitus as described by the interviewees who responded the biographic questionnaires, namely; Anna, Christian, Dilek, Lisa, Ludwig, Marius, Sarah, Thomas and Juan. The chapter is focused on the activist habitus and the trajectories. Still, in order to locate the reader, the activists will be placed within a model of the social space, based on the one in the previous chapter. The graph below attempts not at a precise and detailed positioning in the social space (as present in *Distinction*, 1984) but rather at presenting a visual contrast of the socio-demographic origin of these activists and how they made sense of this. Following the ideas of previous chapter, which presented the differences created by the possession of capital

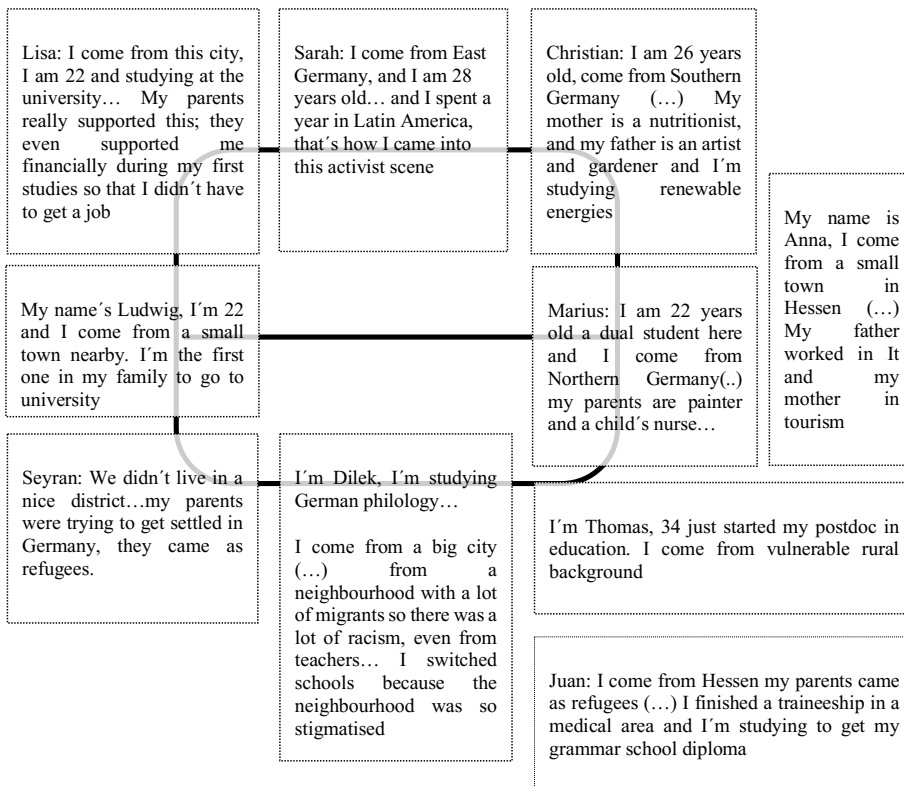


Figure 19 Impressions of Activists and Social Backgrounds

7.1 The activists and their social backgrounds

The diagram in the previous page presents an introduction to the activists by paraphrasing some of the things they said about themselves and their backgrounds. They are placed in such a way to resemble the social space as constructed in the previous chapter; parting from the idea of a (in this case metaphoric) north-south divide (as some of the interviewees attributed to the city itself) which mirrors the possession of different forms of capital, especially financial and cultural capital. Given that the data on which this study is based is limited, this picture attempts at reproducing their standing in the social space, solely based on their descriptions of their backgrounds. Therefore, the activists who are closest to the lower side of the rectangle (representing what in the city would stand for the “asocial South” as Seyran described it) are those who explicitly described themselves as having working-class backgrounds, and their parents as having lower volumes of financial and cultural capital. These were: Thomas, Dilek, Juan and Seyran, all of whom recalled experiencing financial disadvantage. Aside from Thomas, these were also the activists who described themselves as (second generation) migrants and for whom this condition played a significant role in shaping their identity and their interaction with society. Likewise, Dilek, Seyran and Juan claimed they grew up in “stigmatised” working-class neighbourhoods in urban areas whereas Thomas described his background as rural.

Dilek, Seyran and Juan said they had experienced racism (Seyran and Dilek more so than Juan). Thomas and Dilek had university education, Seyran and Juan completed vocational training, but Seyran went back to school to get his grammar school certificate and Juan was doing this at the time of the interview. They both intended to, at some point, enrol at university. Parting from their self-descriptions, Seyran, Dilek, Thomas and Juan could be said to have a working-class habitus, and in the case of Dilek Seyran and Juan, also a migrant habitus. Connecting with the findings in the previous chapter, that presented how interviewees connected certain backgrounds with certain taste, hobbies, ways of doing things, these activists’ habitus is “far” from the habitus and the modes of participation.

Ludwig and Marius, who have similar profiles are around the middle of the rectangle: both claimed to be the first in their families to go to university and to have parents in lower- to middle income positions. Still, neither one of them experienced their origin as a disadvantage, partly because as both claim, most of the people in their towns had similar backgrounds, and partly, because they both report about being connected with local networks of volunteering and community engagement.

Lisa, Anna, Sarah, and Christian are placed on the upper side of the diagram because they all reported about relatively similar backgrounds; they were all either enrolled at the university or completed university degrees. These interviewees could be considered to have a middle-class habitus from their primary socialisation. Even more, their parents were employed in professional or managerial positions.

Lastly, none of them reported about being affected by financial or cultural inequalities. Only Anna claimed to have experienced discrimination because of her sexual identity.

7.2 Activist Trajectories

Considering the different backgrounds described by the interviewees, it is no surprise that their pathways to activism and their contact with political topics are equally diverse: the narratives are consistent with what the social movement literature has established, namely, that there are different pathways towards activism (Bosi /Della Porta 2013, Bosi 2012, Corrigan-Brown 2012b) and these are often shaped by the family's political attitudes, the media diet, the interaction with peers or reinterpretation of grievances and experiences of inequality (Sloam and Henn 2017, Pickard 2019, Klandermans et al 2008). Either directly or indirectly, activists connected aspects of their personal backgrounds with their own pathways towards and motivations for activism: either because they see their parents' as an influence on their political interest, or because they see their socio-economic background as something that created specific hurdles (or opportunities) which not only shaped their pathway to activism but also influenced their political thought and motivation. In other words, the narratives suggest that they "didn't arrive to the groups as blank slates" (Crossley 2003) even if the influence and the incidence of their previous backgrounds played different roles for each one of them.

The analysis also reveals salient similarities when it comes to stages and actors that the interviewees recognise as the most significant in their pathways towards sustained activism. The trajectories followed by Marius and Dilek represent two ideal-typical models of the types of trajectories followed. While he reports about a very lineal and consistent trajectory and a strong influence from his family in his primary socialisation, Dilek re-calls a less lineal path to activism and an early political socialisation that was linked to her own cultural consumption and peers more than to her parents. This conceptualisation draws from the concepts of activist careers (Fillieule/Neveu 2019) and sustained or abeyant trajectories (Corrigan-Brown 2020) which take an interactionist approach to studying sustained activism and zoom into the interplay between the person, the group, the societal dynamics and how this interplay results in different interpretations and developments as activists. The scholar presents the concept of abeyant structures (attributed to Melucci 1986 and Taylor 1989 in Corrigan-Brown 2020, Crossley 2003, 44) and which refers to the ability of activists and groups to be active and draw from their existing contacts and know-how in order to re-engage after periods of suspended or reduced activism. In addition, the trajectories as here described, present the different actors and instances that activists connected to their socialisation and pathways. The results show that most of them remember multi-factor perspectives (Bosi 2012) in which numerous micro- meso and macro factors played a role and socialisation has been an ongoing process in which the main sources of influence change along the way (Reinder 2020).

Abeyant experimental trajectory

Dilek

Initial socialisation: media, international discourses and situations, demonstration (anti-war), engaged school teacher.

Disperse concerns and interests that were not politically framed.

Personal grievance as an important motivator and identity factor.

Abeyant trajectory

- Joined SDS campus group
- Abandoned after two months
- Independent engagement and research
- Returned to campus SDS and stayed for three years
- University Parliament
- Discussion group for peoples of colour
- Linked with networks in environmentalism, anti-racism, anti-capitalism, feminism
- Changing between groups and also acting as an independent activist.
- Issue activist
- Non-linear trajectory
- Starter
- Multiple engagements
- Liquid presence

Sustained lineal Trajectory

Marius

Initial Socialisation: Strong role-model function from his father, strong societal involvement during his early years.

Not “issue-based mobilisation” but general interest in politics and in the organisation

Interest in meeting new people and “doing something of value to serve society”

Persistent trajectory

- Joined the JU when he moved away from home.
- He moved to another city and sought the local JU group again
- Joined the CDU as well
- Adopted positions of responsibility in the JU.
- Has established friendships and working relations mostly within the JU.
- Initial engagement sustained.
- Passive member of JEF
- Interest in advancing in the organisation.
- No significant action as an independent
- Solid or fixed presence.
- Lineal trajectory

Figure 20 Ideal-Typical Trajectories

This figure shows the main stages and characteristics of two activist trajectories, namely those of Dilek and Marius. The contrast is salient: not just because of the differences in the stories of their early political socialisation, but also the stages thereafter. The rest of the trajectories could be situated in between: either tending more towards a “sustained lineal trajectory” or towards an “abeyant experimental” one. While no trajectories are perfectly linear, some of the activists mention less interruptions, changes, and less propensity to combine groups. Moreover, the liquid and solid presence has to do with the extent to which the trajectories have been linked to a specific organisation or group; whether they have been

oscillating between groups, issues, or even between engagement and disengagement. The analysis shows that all interviewees have explored and considered different issues, platforms and even groups. Still, the tendency to explore, combine and to form attachments with networks (more than with specific organisations) was more pronounced among some of the activists than others.

The table below presents the main traits of the trajectories narrated by the other participants. Even if some of the activists had participated in demonstrations or other similar events, or even collaborated with specific groups and organisations, their first enrolment is the instance they recognise as such. Thus, Juan's first enrolment is JEF even if he did support PETA and the workers' union strikes before that. Furthermore, the order given to the participants shows their proximity to the two ideal-typical trajectories; the first ones listed being closer to the abeyant experimental trajectories, and the last ones closer to the lineal and consistent trajectories. Hence as the table suggests, Thomas and Lisa are closest to the two ideal-typical trajectories, whereas the others are spread within the continuum:

Name	Early socialisation	First Enrolment	Pathway
Thomas	University peers Demonstrations	Student Union <i>Greenpeace</i>	Abandoned GP. Briefly joined Robin Wood Started his own group with friends Network activist with links in left-wing spectrum.
Anna	School peers Environmental project	Environmental project	Grew in environmentalism Joined LGBTQ/ feminist networks Life-style and network activist
Sarah	Travel experience Peers	<i>Viva Con Agua</i>	After <i>Viva con Agua</i> she combined with <i>Zero Waste</i> and <i>Food Share</i> Splits action between these groups Taken more responsibilities
Juan	Media, grandfather (mild) EU Project	JEF	Supporter of workers' union and PETA Won EU contest, attended conference Joined JEF Joined Student union Leadership position in JEF Wanted to join political party
Christian	Family One schoolteacher Travel experience	<i>Greenpeace</i>	Grew within <i>Greenpeace</i> Expanded to Foodshare Concrete responsibilities and roles in <i>Greenpeace</i> Has some activity as an independent
Seyran	Father (awareness) Union peers	Workers Union	Lineal growth within the union Reached leadership position Wants to make this his profession Solid commitment with the union
Ludwig	Aunt/ Mother School-Representative	Class Speaker Leader of Student Union	Grew within the school government President of Student Union Expanded to LGBTQ circles Wants to join a political party Politics as a possible career path

Lisa	Family Peers at university	JUSOS	Lineal growth within the party Part of women's and economic groups Part of a "pragmatic" faction Supporter of JEF No significant action as independent
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Figure 21 Trajectories

Despite the differences, all of these interviewees recognised themselves as politically active people connected to one or several organisations or networks. Furthermore, they all saw this as a long-term engagement and as an important part of their lives and they all acknowledged that the sustained political engagement had changed them in some way. More importantly, these pathways were not lineal and certainly not identical, but they articulate around what they consider to be the triggers of their political interest (or awareness) the decision to join a group, negotiating their expectations with the reality of the group (and thus, establishing whether or not it makes sense for them to stay) and their own growth within or outside this initial organisation. These stages were often described as overlapping and iterative; socialisation as a constant process which is an essential part of the shared interaction, but also negotiation and growth as constant necessities.

7.3 Early Political Socialisation

From this point, the difference between the two ideal-typical trajectories is clear: Marius sees his father and his volunteering and community work as the most salient instances whereas Dilek identifies her media consumption and peers as the dominant ones. In other words, one of them came closer to institutionalised and "top-down" mechanisms of early socialisation whereas the other one was closer to autonomous and peer to peer socialisation. Furthermore, Marius connects his enrolment with a new life situation but also with what he describes as an interest in community engagement whereas Dilek is more motivated by specific issues and an attitude of resistance.

Marius (...) my father was politically active; he is still very active in the communal council and so I also learned that it is possible to make your own contribution to society (...)

Actually I did an extra school vocational program where we learned the basics of business administration and I was there as I was in secondary school I think I went once a month and then during the school holidays I went one or two weeks to a small academy to learn the basics of business administration and in the end we wrote a business plan and applied our own ideas at least in writing and I think that's where it starts... this exchange with people outside of school and doing more than just what is taught in school but doing more.. and thanks to this, at some point, I became closer with the fire department volunteers even if my friends weren't

there ... they are still not really active but I am the one who says I'll just do it because I want to do it and I because I see a purpose⁴⁹.

Conversely, Dilek argued she was not a member of any youth associations or clubs in her words "associations? No, there I think we lacked the money for something like that" nor did she see her parents as particularly influential in her early political socialisation; she claimed it was only his father who was marginally interested and rather in Turkish, and not German politics.

Dilek connects her early political socialisation to her own interest in literature, rap music, and art. Likewise, she admits that the discrimination experienced by her and other Muslim youngsters after the September 11 attacks in the USA were also an important trigger of peer-to peer deliberation and an attitude of resistance.

Dilek: (...) I read a lot of Turkish literature at home and noticed there were a lot of political connections, I informed myself, listened to a lot of hip-hop old US American hip-hop, so not 50 Cent but more like Public Enemy and sometimes I found names or terms that I was interested in, so I went to the library and read things, so I think I was eleven when I first read the biography of Malcom X because I heard this in a song and I wanted to know who this was and what role he played. In my case it was like I asked myself a lot of questions... then in my secondary school I learned about art of the XXth century, art and literature during national socialism... So these things really influenced me, how people deal with these difficult political situations, how do they express themselves and these are things that always interested me.

Right that was so that at school they announced that whoever goes (to the anti-Iraq war demonstrations) will be marked with an absent day and we, the whole class, still went together to the demonstration and missed the entire school day... so this was something that was not so consciously political but more like after September 11 we (experienced) a lot of racism even at schools and then came the Iraq war and the we were... particularly us, Muslim youngsters somehow the bad ones and then the question about religion was asked more often... even though this wasn't really an issue before... and I think this was more an issue of resistance than a really conscious political decision ... and right this refugee crisis ... as I was growing up there was this wave of refugees from Yugoslavia we had a lot of them at school so it was

49 allerdings habe ich nen ähm außerschulisches Bildungsprogramm mitgemacht wo wir uns selber quasi die Grundzüge der BWL aneignet haben /I: mhm/ und dort war ich dann ach das war in der Oberstufe ähm einmal im Monat glaube ich für äh oder ne genau es waren immer jeweils in den Schulferien für ein zwei Wochen äh so in kleine Akademien gefahren und da haben wir es gelernt äh Grundzüge BWL und am Ende dann letztendlich auch einen Wissensplan geschrieben und äh eigene Ideen umgesetzt quasi /I: mhm/ also zumindest schriftlich und ich glaube daher kam dann dieses ähm sich mit den Leuten außerhalb dem was man in der Schule lernt austauschen /I: Ja/ alles hinausgehend auch einfach mal mehr machen als man sonst so hat äh das was man sonst äh in der Schule halt beigebracht bekommt auch mal mehr zu machen oder so sondern wirklich mal zu machen ähm und daher kam dann irgendwie auch glaube ich mehr und mehr zusammen mit der Feuerwehr die ich gemacht hab ähm da dieses Interesse ran auch dann das zu machen obwohl halt meine Freunde eher nicht da drin sind /I: mhm/ und eher auch die sind auch immer noch nicht irgendwie aktiv oder so /I: Ja/ aber ich bin da derjenige der gesagt hat „Ich mach es jetzt einfach“ weil ich Bock drauf habe und weil ich den Sinn darin seh (06.24)

like there new pupils there and then they were gone again and no one knew where they went and we didn't really ask either.⁵⁰

The story of Dilek's early socialisation links two important aspects that remained salient throughout her description of her trajectory; an identity as a member of a marginalised group which is turned into action (Klandermans et al 2008) and her learning about international political discourses independently and through aesthetic consumption. Dilek's statement suggests that she was able to connect the identities of grievance and marginalisation of hip-hop lyrics with her own experience of a changing (and increasingly hostile) environment for Muslim youngsters. In addition, she stressed how these situations, and the arrival of refugees were not really being addressed at school. These ideal typical models of socialisation, as well as those of the other activists, revealed further instances, besides families, peers, media, volunteering; schools and early engagements were also identified as relevant spaces of early socialisation by the interviewees. These were narrated and described differently; families were often described as spaces of daily-news deliberation and role models of institutionalised action, volunteering and school instances were described as spaces that triggered a taste for leadership, community engagement and even social capital. Demonstrations and grievance were described as spaces where they experience a shared solidarity, even a common identity and a taste for challenging norms.

The other activists were somewhere in between Marius' and Dilek's ideal typical model: Thomas came closer to Dilek's story, because in his case peer to peer socialisation and protest also had a very salient role. Conversely, Lisa's experience is most like Marius' because her parents were members of the SPD and liked to follow local and international politics. They served as role models for her, but they also supported her availability later on, because they supported her financially during her first studies so that she could have time for political engagement.

Lisa: well, both my parents are in the party (SPD) and of course this was an influence at home... that was not, I mean they weren't really active like they didn't go to meetings but certainly the values and when we talked about politics it was always with this social-democratic focus and, in general, there was a lot of talk about politics at home. My father is a historian so we (also talked) a lot about history and we had newspapers at home (a lot) so I would say

⁵⁰ Genau also das war auch schon so dass wir dass das vorher in der Schule angekündigt wurde wer dort hingehet das wird als Fehltag gewertet /I: oh/ und wir sind als ganze Klasse trotzdem zu der Demonstration gegangen und haben den ganzen Tag die Schule geschwänzt also das war schon so etwas aber das hatte auch keine keine so das war glaube ich auch nicht so was bewusst Politisches sondern das war mehr so wir haben nach dem 11. September sehr viel Rassismus abgekomen auch in den Schulen /I: aha/ und dann kann der Irakkrieg und dann waren irgendwie gerade wir so als muslimische Jugendliche waren halt irgendwie die Bösen dann wurde immer mehr die Frage nach der Religion gestellt die vorher eigentlich irgendwie nie so thematisiert wurde /I: ja/ und ich glaube das war mehr so ein Ausdruck von ja so wie so Widerstand im Kleinen /I: jaja/ als dass es eine bewusste politische Entscheidung war /I: mhm/ ähm ja aber genau so die Flüchtlingskrise als ich klein war gab es ja diese Welle von Geflüchteten aus Jugoslawien /I: ja/ ganz viel das hat man in der Schule halt mitbekommen also das war dann auch so da waren teilweise neue Schüler eben da und dann waren sie eben irgendwann wieder weg und keiner wusste wohin äh aber das haben wir auch nie so in Frage gestellt (41.30)

that's where the strongest influence comes from, that was always an issue, even before I joined the party⁵¹.

Similarly, Christian recalls that politics and environmentalism were always an issue at home and this influenced his interest at an early age.

Well, my mother, and I only know this from stories, but she was definitely in the 60s and 70s active, she was with the green, I think she was with the party. And she was in her younger years also out on the street, so politics were always an issue at home.⁵²

In contrast, Juan, Thomas, Seyran and Sarah claimed that their parents (and families) didn't serve as role models. Juan and Seyran attributed this to their migrant backgrounds, claiming their parents barely spoke German and were busy trying to get settled in the country. Thomas attributes this to his rural working-class origin. Except for Sarah, they all connected this with situations of disadvantage; lack of financial and cultural capital which create additional hurdles for political interest and deliberation. Nonetheless, Seyran's father felt strongly about workers' rights, free speech, and social justice and, thus, he instilled this in his children. Similarly, Juan's grandfather did care about German politics and, since he didn't speak German, he asked Juan to translate the news for him. Seyran, Juan, Sarah and Thomas attribute much of their political socialisation to peer-to-peer socialisation within spaces of volunteering (Sarah) and activism (Thomas, Seyran and Juan). Seyran and Juan attribute much of their political socialisation to their experience with their respective organisations; Seyran within IGMJ and Juan within JEF. Hence these narrations reveal an initial socialisation which, to a great extent, took place after the instance they recognise as their first mobilisation.

Ludwig and Anna report about similar experiences; even though he did discuss political issues with his mother, Ludwig sees his time as a class speaker as a transformative experience which, ultimately, helped him develop a taste for leadership, engagement; and deliberation. Similarly, Anna describes her early engagement in an environmental project at school as an important turning point which not only drove her towards activism, but also deeply influenced her self-perception and her social circle at the time and

51 ja also meine Eltern sind beide in der Partei /I: mhm/ auch in der SPD und das war natürlich ne Prägung auch zu Hause das war zwar nie so wirklich also die waren nie aktiv richtig in der Partei sind nicht zu Sitzungen oder so gegangen allerdings so die Werte und wenn man natürlich über Politik geredet hat das war dann schon in nem sozialdemokratischen Fokus oft ähm generell wurde zu Hause viel über Politik und auch also mein Vater ist Historiker viel auch über Geschichte geredet und auch so Zeitungen und so was hatten wir zu Hause viel also ich würde sagen dass da schon die meiste Prägung auch herkommt ähm /I: mhm/ das war schon immer ein Thema bevor ich in der Partei war (01.16.)

52 I: Wie war den Alltag bzw. das Leben so bevor dem Engagement ähm kannst du vielleicht erzählen wie deine: n bisschen über deine Familie:? ähm: Eltern Geschwister: (.) ähm generell ob die ob das die politisch engagiert oder aktiv waren? ob die eher so traditionell waren [00:02:29] B: also meine Mutter: hat das hab ich allerdings immer nur aus Erzählungen mitbekommen aber die war auf jeden Fall: ähm: (.) so in den (.) 60er 70er Jahren auch äh aktiv (.) ähm: genau äh: hat sich da auch bei den Grünen /I: m-hm/ also bei der Partei glaub ich engagiert hat sie erzählt (.) und war da auch äh: quasi in ihrem @noch jugendlicheren@ Alter /I: @.@/ ähm: öfter auf der Straße (.) ähm: (.) ja (.) äh also P:olitik w- w:ar eigentlich auch immer so'n Thema bei uns zuhause äh: ich: hab irgendwann auch angefangen regelmäßig irgendwie mich zu informieren also (.) über: die Medien Zeitung hatten wir halt immer zuhause und äh (.) ja (.) das g:ing so ähm: halt weiß ich nich (.) als ich 14 15 war hab ich so das irgendwie gezielt wollt ich dann auch wissen irgendwie worüber alle reden oder so (.) /I: ja/ weiß nich ob's da'n bestimmten Antrieb gab (.) dass: mich das auf einmal interessiert hat (.) ähm: (.) genau (.) [00:05:05]

was the reason she started to become interested in electoral platforms. As I asked about his political interest growing up and his early motivations to engage, Ludwig connected his grammar-school education and his election as class-speaker

Given that I went to a grammar school, I did discuss politics often with my mother and my aunt with my brother this wasn't possible (...) so it was really with my attendants that I talked about this...with my brother it wasn't possible and at school, honestly, we didn't have much from our politics class and really there were many that came from humbler origin... I mean not poor origins but I mean in terms of education⁵³

It all started I think in the sixth grade when I was elected class speaker. Since then, I was always in the school representative bodies, I was elected speaker of my cohort and even school speaker. So, there I came to realise ok I can act in decision-making instances, and I am capable of delegating so it looks like I have a leader personality, that was the first point and the second one was I realised that I like to speak (publicly) like concert moderation and such things and that works well and so these things combined.

Interestingly, Ludwig connected the fact that he attended a grammar school to his interest in discussing political topics at home with his mother. Even more, he connected his peers' disinterestedness in politics to their non-academic backgrounds. Ludwig's views resonate some of the arguments presented in the previous chapter, in regards to the Bourdieusian (see: Distinction 1984) assumption that political interest (and even a political opinion) is linked to certain forms of incorporated cultural (and symbolic) capital. Moreover, the identification of the position of class-speaker as the origin of his later interest in leadership and engagement resonates with the literature that has claimed that these instances of representation and co-determination can foster an interest in volunteering and further political engagement (Patrikios/ Shepard 2013, Kiess 2021). Dilek and Seyran were also elected class-speakers and their stories present an interesting contrast to Ludwig's. Dilek never took office because she switched schools to avoid using the name of her highly stigmatised district in her university applications, and Seyran served as a speaker but found the role pointless. Both link their experiences with this specific instance of representation to a structural factor; for Dilek it was the fact that her district was too stigmatised, and this could have reduced her chances when applying to universities, and for Seyran because he thought the position was made to be pointless, to make little difference. Dilek's experience exemplifies a further mechanism through which the lack of different forms of capital, but also the negative symbolic capital associated to her neighbourhood, created additional hurdles for her participation. Most of the testimonies cite different and intertwined actors and instances as relevant in their early political socialisation; the influence of parents (either as role models, raisers of awareness or supporters of engagement) are not detached from how they made sense of their interactions with peers,

⁵³ Dadurch, dass ich im Gymnasium war dann habe ich häufiger mal mit meiner Mutter mit meiner Tante ab und zu über Politik geredet... mit meinen Brüdern könnte ich das nicht so. Das wären tatsächlich meine Erziehungsberechtigten mit denen ich darüber diskutiert habe () In der Schule ich muss ehrlich gestehen in meiner Stufe da würde nicht viel... in der Politik Veranstaltung ...Und wirklich gibt es viele die aus einfachen Verhältnissen stammen... jetzt nicht arme Verhältnisse aber ich meine jetzt von Bildungsstand...

school and media. For example, Dilek was influenced by counter-discourses and media but her testimony also suggests she made-sense of these and acted upon her minority identity within her community of peers. Christian and Lisa claim that their parents often talked about politics, bought newspapers, and watched political events (Lisa's father liked to watch the US elections) which suggests they link their parents' influence to their approach to media (at least initially) and their motivation to consciously gain knowledge about politics.

Christian: We always had newspapers and media at home... so at some point, I was 14 or 15, I started reading the newspaper myself, because I wanted to understand what everyone was talking about (...) 54

The stories of socialisation reveal not only how they re-interpret early experiences within their political frames, but also how these experiences link to their own backgrounds. Perhaps the most obvious examples are Lisa, Marius and Christian whose parents were role-models and influenced their political concerns. Less obvious are the stories of Lisa, Anna, Christian and Sarah in terms of the resources they had which enabled them volunteering (Christian and Sarah) and financial support for their early activism (Anna and Lisa). In that sense, activists didn't exclusively connect their political motivation and socialisation to what they had but even explained their pathways in terms of what they (considered) they lacked: Seyran and Juan see the political education at their schools as "very poor" and link this to the type of school they attended.

When it comes to the early political socialisation many of them referred to hegemonic definitions of politics (Manning 2010) in terms of directly thinking about electoral processes, political parties, parliaments, international conflicts; this is evident as Dilek argues she didn't know if their decision to attend anti-war demonstrations was directly "political" and in Anna's argument that her environmental activities were not, at least initially, directly political (even if she does see this environmental engagement as her first mobilisation). Aside from Lisa and Marius, who had strong role models of partisan engagement, many of the others see the confluence of factors of their early socialisation as helpful in triggering political curiosity, a sense of justice or a taste for leadership and community engagement but without concrete ideas of where to engage politically and without having articulated and framed their interest politically. These stories of early socialisation reveal a profound difference of "content"; the institutionalised spaces and instances that Marius mentions are linked not only to so-called conventional repertoires of action but to a perception of political action that is linked to learning about and reproducing established mechanisms, actors and discourses whereas the instances that Dilek names were closely associated to issue-based activism (she cites the influences of hip-hop, Malcom X, etc) but also to counter-discourses and identities linked to grievance and minority status. Besides this, Dilek didn't have these early experiences of politicisation within structured groups but rather within loose networks of friends and peers and by her own interest in literature and art, whereas Marius had a closer experience with organised and structured groups (joining his father to communal meetings,

54 Christian über: die Medien Zeitung hatten wir halt immer zuhause und äh (.) ja (.) das g;ing so ähm: halt weiß ich nich (.) als ich 14 15 war hab ich so das irgendwie gezielt wollt ich dann auch wissen irgendwie worüber alle reden oder so (.) /I: ja/ weiß nich ob's da'n bestimmten Antrieb gab (.) dass: mich das auf einmal interessiert hat (.) ähm: (.) genau (.) [00:05:05]

volunteering with the young fire fighters, etc.) Lastly, Dilek and Marius recognise different protagonists when they talk about their early political socialisation, though some give parents and institutionalised instances a greater role (Marius, Lisa, Seyran, Ludwig, Juan) while others attributed a greater element of their early socialisation to self-organised spaces and peer to peer socialisation (Thomas and Dilek).

Furthermore, some of these stories also reveal interesting differences: some of them connect socialisation and influences to concrete issues (environment, human rights, social justice) while others link this to a taste for social and community engagement, leadership, deliberation, platforms but with no concrete links to issues.

7.4 First Enrolment

This table presents the first enrolment as identified by the interviewees as well as those events, people and prior experiences they linked to this first enrolment.

Name	Age/ Life Stage	Organisation	Connection	Linked Events	Previous Experience
Anna	15- School	Environmental Group	school friends	Voluntary year, Study choices.	No
Christian	23- University	<i>Greenpeace</i>	Went with his girlfriend	Long-standing concerns and experience in Latin America.	Volunteer
Dilek	18 starting university	Pol. Party (SDS)	Came alone. Interested in stances on racism	Cultural consumption Racism experiences	Demonstr.
Lisa	19 second year university	Pol Party (JUSOS) on campus	A friend invited her.	Parents influence, good image of the party participation in a local electoral campaign	Electoral campaign
Marius	18 in a new city	Pol Party (JU)	Came alone	Fathers influence, shared values	Social engagement
Sarah	26- returning from abroad	<i>Viva con Agua</i>	Came alone	Concerns with environmentalism. Experience in Lat. America	Volunteer
Seyran	21 starting new training.	Workers' Union	Through organised meeting	Experience of discrimination.	Class speaker

Thomas	22 University	Greenpeace	Came alone	General interest in dissent. Liked GPs big demonstrations.	Students strike Discussions in “left-wing circles” and student body.
Juan	18	JEF	Came alone	Through contest he decided to become active.	Strike participation Animal rights group
Ludwig	13	Class Speaker	Alone	Elected by his peers	No

Figure 22 First Enrolment

As the table shows, one of the most salient similarities is that they many of them enrolled at a time of starting a new stage in their lives: Dilek, Marius, Sarah and Seyran, are perhaps the more remarkable examples. Likewise, almost all of them enrolled after moving away from the family home, except for Anna and Ludwig whose first enrolment took place during their school years. In terms of age and life stage, Ludwig and Anna enrolled “first” while Sarah enrolled somewhat later in life, after she had already completed her studies, started working and had spent a year abroad. Moreover, almost all of them report about some activist experience prior to their enrolment: Sarah and Christian spent time abroad as volunteers, Marius, Juan, and Thomas report about experiences of social engagement, Dilek, Juan and Thomas about protest participation, and Lisa was a campaign volunteer. Albeit with nuanced salience, most of them linked these experiences with their enrolment or at least with the path that led to their enrolment.

Most of them articulated the story of their first enrolment within a series of latent emotional and ideological needs, and, in some cases, they linked the stories of their first enrolment with previous experiences of event-based mobilisation, volunteering, or, in general, to their peer groups and the experiences of times of transition. Hence, some of the activists express the enrolment as a culmination (crystallisation) of latent intentions and needs, as well as the attempt to be “coherent” with their own beliefs or work through past grievances. As interviewees narrate their own processes of socialisation and initial engagement, they interconnect different instances such as family, school, peers, national- and even international discourses and events; Marius linked his affinity for moderate political positions, his early experiences with volunteering and community engagement, the experience of being alone in a new city for the first time, and the ongoing refugee crisis at the background with his first enrolment. He argued, he wanted to meet new people but also to “do something useful and contribute to community”.

Dilek, on the other hand, connected her grievances during her school years and moving to a new city to the opportunity to “start new” and connect with politically active networks.

Interestingly, both activists whose trajectories serve as ideal-typical models for this analysis claimed that their early enrolment was in a political party; Marius joined the local JU when he moved to a new city and Dilek joined the campus SDS group when she started university. Still, the reasoning behind this decision, as well as the experience thereafter show significant differences

Marius: well, I started in 2015 in the JU at the time I was still living in (big city) simply because I wanted to do something in my free time, something meaningful that serves society... and this was missing when I first moved to (big city). I was also relatively alone because I didn't know anyone and that was pretty hard for me, for the first time to move from the small town to the big city and this was a shock so I wanted to do something in my free time but I needed something flexible (to serve society) and then that was the time of the refugee crisis or problematic or however you want to call it unfortunately I wasn't very active but this really inspired me to be active... not directly the refugee crisis itself but it was a time when I said ok now you really MUST start doing something and there it was partisan politics was the first thing that came to mind.⁵⁵

Dilek: During my school years I was already very interested in politics, I mean I took the advanced politics class but in my home city I never really had the access and I hoped that this would change when I started university so I looked at the local university groups⁵⁶

Dilek: I guess at the time it was mostly instinct, I just had the feeling that if there is a party that I can really identify with then it is the left party... simply because at the time they were very engaged against racism but at the time I didn't know anyone, I didn't get there through acquaintances... so automatically I couldn't identify with other parties.⁵⁷

55 Also eingetreten bin ich äh das ist zweitausend und fünfzehn glaube ich äh in die Junge Union da habe ich damals noch in gewohnt ähm einfach weil ich irgendwie was machen wollte in der Freizeit was quasi Sinn hat was irgendwie der Gesellschaft gut tut ne denn ähm in den Dorf wo ich aufgewachsen bin äh da war halt dann da hatte man eben diese diese Gemeinschaft die man sonst immer was ich sonst eigentlich eher blöd finde weil es sehr floskelhaft ist diese Dorfgemeinschaft aber die habe ich tatsächlich dort äh da hat man noch ähm in der Freiwilligen Feuerwehr war man viel aktiv man hat sich viel getroffen um Müll zu sammeln oder so ich selber war auch in der Freiwilligen Feuerwehr man hat äh viele Dorffeste zusammen gemacht alles so organisiert ähm und ähm ja mein Vater war ein bisschen auch politisch aktiv ist immer noch war sehr sehr aktiv auch dort im Gemeinderat ähm und so habe ich da auch gelernt dass man eigentlich durch seinen eigenen kleinen Anteil was für die Gesellschaft tun kann im Kleinen wie im Großen und ähm das hatte mir irgendwie gefehlt ne ich bin dann nach gefahren äh gezogen äh war da erstmal relativ allein weil ich kannte keinen mh ähm das war für mich ziemlich @krass@ so von so einem kleinen Dorf in die Großstadt zu ziehen und irgendwann als man so den ersten Schock verdaut hat merkt man dann so irgendwas möchte ich noch machen neben der Freizeit (unverständlich, Krach im Hintergrund) aber ich brauche was flexibles wo ich der Gesellschaft dienen kann und ähm da war dann die Sache mit den äh so was man jetzt wie Flüchtlingskrise-Problematik oder wie auch immer nennen /I: mhm/ will war halt da leider gerade ganz aktiv also hatte mich irgendwigerreizt jetzt mal wirklich mal was zu machen ähm aber nicht wegen der Flüchtlingskrise oder einfach gesellschaftlich das war für mich so ein Aufbruch wirklich jetzt musst Du es mal wieder wirklich machen /I: Ja/ äh Dich irgendwie engagieren und dann war eben die ähm Parteipolitik eigentlich das was mir am ehesten zusagte weil ich viel diskutieren kann ich kann meine Meinung testen /I: mhm/

56 ich war schon auch seit der Schulzeit immer sehr politisch interessiert /I: mhm/ ähm hatte auch Politikwissenschaften als Hauptfach gehabt ähm also als Leistungskurs ähm hatte aber in meiner Heimatstadt nie so den Zugang hatte mir erhofft dass das so ein bisschen in der Uni anders werden würde /I: mhm/ hab mich an den in den lokalen Universitätshochschulgruppen umgesehen

57 Ja ich glaube damals war das eher noch so ein Bauchgefühl /I: ja/ ähm dass ich so das Gefühl hatte wenn es eine Partei gibt mit der ich mich identifizieren kann /I: mhm/ ist das die Linke /I: ja/ ähm einfach weil sie auch damals ja viel gegen Rassismus vorgegangen ist und ähm sehr aktiv natürlich auch geworben hat also ich kenne kannte damals auch keine Mitglieder es war jetzt auch nicht so /I: ok/ dass ich irgendwie (10.48) über Bekannte oder so was ne sondern das war irgendwie /I: ja/ so automatisch konnte mich nicht mit einer anderen Partei identifizieren (10.57)

Dilek and Marius connect their enrolment with a moment of biographic availability and access (Earl et al 2017). The stories of their first enrolment show different interpretations of a similar action: joining a political party. One of them is more motivated by a need to establish new contacts, fulfil his expectations of social commitment within spaces that are consistent with his socialisation and the other by specific issues and grievances, which are also linked to the narrative of her early political socialisation

The other testimonies show similar patterns; feelings of moral or societal obligation (Christian, Sarah) and the need to be “coherent” with their values Christian:

I always thought well I can get outraged over certain situations, but then I can at least try to at least be coherent with this personally or be able to say that I do it better. So, I started eating less meat, being a more conscious consumer and then getting better informed. I had planned to go to *Greenpeace* for a long time, or at least take a look at it until I said ok, you go there and try to get involved and try to be active for the things that you consider correct⁵⁸

Christian’s statement resembles the “feeling of urgency” that Marius describes when he talks about his first enrolment, even if in Marius’ case the need to contribute to society is also linked to a search for connections. Furthermore, Christian’s testimony is similar to Sarah’s because they both connect their first enrolment to their long-standing environmental concerns but also to the ‘shock’ experience of their time as volunteers in Latin America. Nonetheless, while they shared a similar need for coherence, their decisions about enrolment evidence different expectations from the organisations. Sarah prioritised the possibility to explore and improvise, whereas Christian was convinced by *Greenpeace*’s salience in the media and broad thematic platform.

Christian: I guess this is because *Greenpeace* is very well known and very present in the media and I also saw a lot of what they do and I liked it and I also liked that they work on a broad segment of issues I mean not just environmental protection or climate protection but both, and *Greenpeace* is not a typical organisation that deals with people, I mean they do, indirectly because in fighting climate change(...) And also the story of *Greenpeace* it comes from a different movement, from the anti-atom movement which prioritised protecting people because in the end it is about protecting the livelihood of people...that’s what convinced me because I

⁵⁸ I: und wann hast du dann äh: (.) angefangen dich sozial oder politisch zu engagieren? B:(.) ähm: (.) also im Prinzip also soziales Engagement als soziales Engagement kann man das Jahr /I: ja/ in Peru bezeichnen /I: genau/ also das war ja im Prinzip so'n sozialer Freiwilligendienst (.) äh: (.) ja (.) und ähm: (.) im Anschluss (.) w:ar das dann aber erstmal tatsächlich wieder: etwas nebensächlich also nich äh: weil ich kein Interesse mehr hatte /I: m-hm/ sondern weil ich mich glaub ich hier wieder erstmal wieder einfänden musste und dann (.) hab ich äh: (.) ja quasi zwischen: dem Beginn meines Studiums und dem Jahr in: in: Südamerika ähm: hab ich einfach m- hier gearbeitet und äh:m (.) genau und dann ähm: mit dem Studium: mit äh: der Thematik hab ich mich glaub ich schon auch verstärkt dann immer mehr für diese Themen interessiert /I: m-hm/ also erneuerbare Energien Nachhaltigkeit (.) ähm: Umweltprobleme etc. ähm: und hab dann auch ähm: nach und nach versucht mein eigenes Verhalten n bisschen umzustellen und ähm (.) hab m- immer mehr gesagt so quasi: ähm: (.) ja man kann sich aufregen und so aber ähm: (.) wenn man darüber klagt über bestimmte Zustände dann sollte man das möglichst auch irgendwie selber vertreten können oder von sich sagen dass man's besser macht /I: ja/ (.) oder versuchen besser zu machen wenigstens (.) genau (.) das ist natürlich nicht immer ganz einfach (.) aber: ich hab das dann irgendwie versucht also (.) hab irgendwann angefangen (.) weniger Fleisch zu essen: ähm (.) bewusster einzukaufen /I: m-hm/ und so weiter und äh mich zu informieren verstärkt und (.) hab dann: äh schon (.) also ich hatte sehr lange schon vorgehabt äh zu *Greenpeace* zu gehen /I: ja/ oder mich mir das zumindest mal anzuschauen bevor ich tatsächlich (.) äh dann hier aufgeschlagen bin (.) genau (.) und dann ähm. (.) ja (.) irgendwann äh: hab ich dann gesagt so jetzt gehst du mal hin und äh schau mal was die so machen und ähm (.) versuchst dich einzubringen (.) /I: ja/ und ähm: (.) eben auch aktiv (.) für das: einzustehen was du denkst was richtig ist [00:13:04]

think that is the most important thing, protecting the livelihood... which is not to say that I don't find other things to be important.⁵⁹

As he talked about his first enrolment, Christian described this as a gradual process because he claimed he was interested in environmentalism and human rights, but the experience in Latin America made him more aware of the need to get involved. He told me he liked the organisation's history, the platform and the many possibilities they offer for activism, so as soon as he felt settled-back in Germany he attended the first meeting. His story is very similar to Sarah's, because she was also a volunteer in Latin America and described this as a decisive experience. Sarah wanted something more flexible that also connected with her interest in developing countries. Since a friend of hers knew *Viva con Agua*, she joined this group.

Anna, Juan, Ludwig and Seyran first enrolled through institutional projects or bodies for youth representation. Anna first enrolled in an environmental project at school, and she links this early interest to her circle of friends and the support this received from school and parents; whereas Juan first enrolled after participating in an EU contest which gave him the chance to go to Brussels and attend conferences about the European Union and develop ideas about how to bring it closer to young people.

Ludwig starts his narrative about engagement with him becoming class speaker in the sixth grade and he links this to a general interest in leadership, holding positions of representation and coordination. Lastly, Seyran joined the union and decided to be an active member after he started his second apprenticeship, and he linked his first enrolment to the access he had through the apprenticeship and to the experience of being bullied in his first apprenticeship. Anna and Ludwig don't connect their first enrolment to a need for coherence or a sense of societal obligation, nor do they link these to a new life-stage as many of the others do. These were situations of access they found during their early years and which both see as transformative experiences for them personally given that it strongly shaped their social circles, their roles at schools and their later development. Juan was already socially active and interested in environmentalism, inequality, and healthcare as he joined JEF; the project he was part of gave him the opportunity to get in touch with new networks, gain more understanding about Europe.

⁵⁹ Christian:(.) ähm: (.) also vermutlich aus (.) dem Grund weil *Greenpeace* schon sehr bekannt ist und präsent also: /I: m-hm/ und (.) ja (.) oft in den Medien /I: ja/ und hab dann auch v- viel mitbekommen was die so machen und fand das gut (.) ähm: und ich fand auch gut dass sie eben das n sehr breites Spekt- Spektrum bedienen also: ähm: (.) ja (.) quasi äh: nicht nur Umwelt und: nicht nur und nicht nur Umweltschutz oder Klimaschutz sondern irgendwie äh: beides (.) ich mein bei *Greenpeace* hat man (.) das ist keine: ähm (.) keine: klassische Organisation die sich äh jetzt (.) ähm: (.) um Menschen kümmert /I: m-hm/ sag ich mal so (.) ich mein indirekt natürlich auch (.) /I: ja/ und eben der Klimawandel zum Beispiel bekämpft wird (.) ähm: (.) und im Übrigen ähm war das ja auch mal gesch- also wenn man auf die Geschichte von *Greenpeace* guckt äh: gab's da auch also das ist ja aus'm aus ner anderen Bewegung irgendwie entstanden aus ne Anti-Atom-Bewegung wo dann: ja auch erstmal auch äh: zum einen im Vordergrund stand die Menschen zu schützen (.) ähm genau (.) und letzten Endes ist es ja geht es auch um die Bewahrung der Lebensgrundlagen (.) /I: m-hm/ ähm (.) genau und ähm ich glaube ich fand das am überzeugendsten weil: (.) ähm (.) ja weil weil es eben ähm quasi das (.) also ähm: das versucht zu bewahren was am wichtigsten ist (.) meiner Meinung nach (.) ähm (.) und zwar (.) die Lebens@grundlagen@/I: ja/ der Menschen (.) ja (.) und ähm (.) ja (.) genau ich glaub das war so der: Motivator also es ist jetzt nicht so dass ich sage ähm (.) das ist m- m- das (.) j- also ich möchte damit jetzt nicht sagen dass andere Sachen nicht auch wichtig sind (.) /I: klar/ ähm: /I: aber:/ genau (.) aber: ähm: ich (.) f: and das irgendwie in dem Moment am: für mich am passendsten (.) /I: ja/ ja [00:15:21]

Spaces of education (schools and specially universities) were crucial in opening access to networks of mobilisation or in bringing information closer to the activists (as in Juan's case) this is much in consonance with the specialised literature which stresses the importance of biographic availability, resources and networks in process of socialisation and mobilisation (Pickard 2019, Earl et al 2017, Henn/Sloam 2018). Likewise, the role of education centres (specially universities) in providing this access has been amply explored by the social science literature (Pilkinton et al 2018). The testimonies, however, present differentiated ways in which these spaces of education can provide opportunities for socialisation and mobilisation; through instances of representation (like in Ludwig's case) through institutionalised projects and contests (like in Anna's and Juan's experience) or by bringing youngsters closer to like-minded people and spaces of autonomous self-organised deliberation (like Thomas and Dilek). The contrast of how Ludwig experienced being a school speaker and later president of the student union as a role of mediation and leadership whereas Thomas experienced the student council as a space for deliberation, self-organisation and dissidence and even a space to exercise criticism against the university.

Most of the interviewees mobilised at times of transitions; after moving out of their parents' house, in some cases after moving to a bigger city and starting university or a new traineeship. These were usually phases of change during which they were opening for new experiences and contacts. This resonates with the social movements research that highlight the importance of biographic availability (Earl et al 2017) and stresses the advantages of universities for mobilising and organising (Pickard 2019, Earl et al 2017). The interviews also suggest that while most of them had emotional attachments towards one or more issues, the decision to join a specific organisation is usually framed as a rational one; most of them like to emphasise that they did some research about the organisations available in their immediate context. After this, many activists tried to establish an identity and a connection with the organisation. In that sense, their perception of relevance (of certain political topics) and their perception either of effectiveness of or legitimacy of certain repertoires of action came into play, but also their affinity with the group, their perception of the internal dynamics, their expectations.

7.5 After Mobilisation

The ways in which interviewees reflected about their post-enrolment experiences was shaped by what they understood as their first enrolment was and what their expectations from activism were. In consonance with much of the literature about sustained activism, interviewees reveal how their sustained political engagement is characterised by constant peer to peer socialisation (Fillieule/ Neveu 2019, 2003, 2004) changes in in the intensity and the nature of their engagement (Bunnage 2014, Corrigan-Brown 2012b, Klandermans 1994, 1997). Moreover, in making sense of their pathways after the initial

enrolment, activists see themselves as agents who are constantly changing, as are the organisations and the broader societal contexts. Activists in the sample showed a reflective attitude towards their own trajectories and a shared assumption that this process has brought growth and change into their lives. The narratives about their pathways connect personal (expectations, self-assessed competence, availability, proximity), organisational (social dynamics, repertoires of action, organisational positions, structure) and societal (societal debates, elections, social crises, large demonstrations) aspects.

Even if the age of the interviewees makes it difficult to speak about activist careers, they do identify stages and change: an initial stage that most of them remember as a time of (mostly) passive learning, followed by episodes of growth, connection, and reflection. These are not neatly- separated stages and they often overlap. Still, for the sake of analysis, the steps in the trajectories are conceptualised lineally. The description that activists gave to their trajectories is here conceptualised within the two ideal-typical models proposed initially, namely the lineal consistent and the abeyant experimental trajectories (displayed by Marius and Dilek respectively) Naturally, activists combine several steps and many of them fall between these ideal-typical models.

They often described the initial stages after their first enrolment as periods of exploring and trying to understand the organisational jargon, dynamics, strategies and getting to know the other activists. Perhaps the exception to this were Ludwig and Anna, who having first enrolled at school (he became speaker, and she joined the eco-path) they were already in a familiar environment and the tasks were clear from the start. Thus, what Ludwig and Anna describe is rather how their new roles changed their positions within these already familiar environments.

Most of the narrations about the initial stages were characterised by a sense of otherness: many of the of interviewees saw themselves as outsiders and this was partly attributed to their lack of sector or organisation-specific cultural capital (Lisa, Juan, Dilek) to the lack of emotional and personal ties with the group. The distance was expressed differently; Lisa points at the lack of sector-specific cultural capital and, in general, lack of political competence; she didn't feel confident talking about the political topics, she didn't understand the organisational jargon and she didn't understand the procedures. Juan on the other hand, pointed at the distance created by cultural capital in a concrete dimension (understanding certain terms) but also in its symbolic dimension;

Lisa: As I started at the beginning... I didn't say anything in the first couple of meetings and I just sat there and listened and I had the feeling that the others knew a whole to and I didn't know anything⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Lisa-. Also ich als ich am Anfang angefangen habe ich weiß die ersten paar Sitzungen habe ich nichts gesagt ich saß da einfach nur hab zugehört und ich hatte das Gefühl alle anderen wissen total viel und ich weiß gar nichts

Juan: It was hard to find myself within the group... there are a lot of „academics “

These two initial stories reveal a tacit recognition of how they acknowledge specific forms of cultural capital acting as closing mechanisms. In particular Juan's statement alludes to the symbolic dimension of some of the closing mechanisms: as Lisa says, and many of the others as well, the groups are open for everyone, there are no official entry requirements the possession of specific forms of recognised and institutionalised cultural capital confer a symbolic value, a form of symbolic capital that makes people feel more comfortable and more confident... and those who don't have it see this as a marker of difference.

Lisa told me part of the initial awkwardness came from not understanding much about the internal dynamics; she mentioned they have procedures for discussions, abbreviations and had gestures which were used routinely (and which she has come to use routinely as well) but at the time had no meaning to her. Though he joined a smaller organisation than Lisa, Juan also felt lost at the start. Partly because of the complicated language people used and partly because he was the only one who wasn't a university student (or graduate) and he saw this as an additional hurdle.

7.5.1.1 Moving Forward: Lineal Trajectory

The lineal trajectory doesn't necessarily refer to constant upward progress but to the pathways of those activists who have remained consistently with an organisation and consolidated their positions therein. This consolidation involves understanding how the organisation works and being able to find a place for themselves within it, having a sense of personal and ideological identity with the organisation.

During our first interview, Marius explained the reasons that led him to join the JU; he recognised his father's influence and his wish to do something for society, but also his preference for what he called "politics with a sense of proportion". These, and his own admission that he joined at a time when he was looking to meet new people, reveal much about what his expectations were.

The thing is the other political parties seemed to be too stuck in their ideas and too focused on certain things. For example, the Green and Left (parties) are, in my view, too ideologically shaped, because I learned to go with a sense of proportion (about things) and not with a fixed opinion and then stick to a specific area... so for me it was only the SPD and CDU that came into question... In the CDU what convinced me was what I have said several times, this idea of doing politics with a sense of proportion, that is important... and to be reflective and to

approach everything with serenity... For me the CDU best represented these ideas at the time and so far, this has been confirmed⁶¹

To this he added, that if anything the refugee crisis helped him confirm that he was right when he decided to enrol in the JU. Marius stated that his expectations of meeting people and doing something for society had been met. Moreover, his statements also reveal that he has personal and ideological connections with the organisation. He has increasingly adopted organisational roles including positions of responsibility, he joined the mother organisation as well (CDU) and has good relationships with the others.

I don't know what others think of me but I get along pretty well and that is pretty good in our group and with many (I have) become friends by now⁶².

Marius statements reveal that he had taken the organisational roles and felt deeply committed to the organisation and he had internalised the concerns. Marius felt like this was the right place to be and the right thing to do. Moreover, his statement about the fluctuation in personnel (depending on the event at sight) suggests that he was acquainted with a salient aspect of the organisation's dynamic, at least in his own district.

Like Marius, Lisa was closer to the lineal trajectory. And like most of the activists, she framed her activist development as a confluence of personal, organisational, and structural factors. She attributed her quick adjustment to her family's social-democratic orientation, to the fact that she knew a few of the JUSOS from before, and to her positive experience as a campaign volunteer. She also recognised that the position and orientation of the JUSOS in Mannheim also made her start easier; this was, as mentioned in the first chapter, the largest youth organisation and had, as she described, a more "pragmatic" orientation. Lastly, Lisa mentioned the refugee crisis as a structural factor that positively impacted her initial stage

I mobilised in 2015 in summer and that (the refugee crisis) started in autumn that means right on time so as I was there that was the first big topic that I dealt with and that we constantly

61 I: Warum hast du dich für die JU entschieden? Marius (...) das Ding ist nur ähm viele oder die anderen Parteien waren mir ähm bisschen zu festgefahren oder zu stark auf ein bestimmte Fokus gelegt /I: Ok/ also beispielsweise Grüne Linke die sind für mich zu stark ideologisch geprägt, weil ich schon immer gelernt hab man soll mit Augenmaß an das rangehen ähm und ähm und nicht quasi mit so einer festgefahrenen Meinung rangehen und sich halt nur auf ein bestimmtes einen bestimmten Bereich ähm festfahren quasi ähm und dann blieben eigentlich nur noch für mich quasi SPD oder CDU übrig /I: mhm/ ähm und da in der CDU war es dann eher was mich da überzeugt hat was ein bisschen dieses was glaube ich immer oft gesagt habe es ist der Grundgedanke dass man eine Politik mit Augenmaß betreibt /I: mhm (...) es halt wichtig sich selbst zu reflektieren und da eben ein bisschen mit ein bisschen Gelassenheit an alles ranzugehen /I: Ja/ das hatte für mich die CDU am meisten verkörpert zu dem Zeitpunkt und hat sich bis jetzt auch ähm weitestgehend bestätigt ja (14.00)

62 B: Ähm eigentlich ziemlich gut also /I: Ja?/ (macht Geräusch mit dem Mund) Tsschh ich komme mit allen klar wir diskutieren sehr gerne wir sind alle sehr offen und wir wir schätzen auch die Meinung von anderen ähm und öh da komm ich ganz gut klar aber auch ich glaube es liegt aber ein bisschen an meinem Menschenbild weil ich eben jeden so nehm wie er ist und äh von vornherein eigentlich schon davon ausgeh dass jemand eine andere Meinung hat als ich /I: ja/ auch wenn er ins gleiche Ziel einzahlen will aber das ist halt so ähm und ich weiß nicht wie wie andere über mich denken aber ich komme eigentlich mit allen gut klar und das ist bei uns eigentlich sehr gut und ähm und halt haupt- sogar bei ziemlich vielen äh mittlerweile auch freundschaftlich. (42.48)

discussed and also constantly engaged with and this was a good thing because there was a lot to do... and then I was directly... I started and it started (the activities) directly we offered help to refugees so we offered in Mannheim language courses also from the student union ... so you could immediately do a lot of things and directly there at the local level and so you could see that something happening the refugees were arriving at the train station so you directly had to see what to do and that was at the beginning really helpful... Politics are often abstract like you write proposals and then they land somewhere (...) and there I saw there was a difference and in that sense it was good that I kind of caught this specific point in time to start because it really motivated me⁶³.

Interestingly, by the time of the interview Lisa felt much more confident with the procedures and with drafting proposals and, in general, with the “abstracter” aspect of activism. But she still valued that her start was shaped by a lot of direct hands-on action, which gave her a direct feeling of gratification. Much like Marius, she has also grown within the organisation and revealed a combination of commitment, friendship, and ideological identification when she talked about the organisation.

Seyran followed a similar path in that he also established a shared identity and deep feelings of friendship and commitment with IGMJ, perhaps in his case even stronger since he is the one who most passionately spoke about his transformation through activism. One of the caveats he brings into the picture is that he attributed much more of his initial political socialisation to this precise organisation, and the second one is that he stressed that feeling that he can really influence workers was an important motivation for him

Seyran: I give seminars myself and then (seeing) this „click effect on people that’s my motivation to give the next seminar... because you talk about something like capitalism and redistribution and how much money the rich have and how much money the rest of the world has... seeing this click effect on people when you explain it to them (...) I have been told I am a funny guy, when I give seminars and I think that’s my strength⁶⁴

Naturally, the lineal trajectories aren’t free of conflict or criticism; Lisa is critical of the left-leaning factions in the JUSOS, Marius has been critical of the more conservative sectors in his party and, as described in the first chapter, Seyran had conflicts with some of the regional leaders of IGMJ because of the use of politically correct language. These are the activists who, despite possible conflicts,

⁶³ Lisa: der Flüchtlingskrise war es schon so ich bin halt wie gesagt 2015 eingetreten und dann /I: mhm/ im Sommer und dann hat das irgendwie im Herbst angefangen das heißt es war so pünktlich /I: ja/ als ich dabei war das war das erste große Thema /I: ja/ ähm wo wir halt immer drüber geredet haben und auch ähm immer sehr viel gemacht haben es war aber eigentlich auch in dem Sinne gut weil es gab echt viel zu tun also ich war direkt /I: jaja klar/ angefangen es ging direkt los /I: mhm/ ok wir müssen schauen ähm wir haben Flüchtlings-äh-Hilfe gemacht wir haben ähm in Mannheim so ähm Sprachkurse angeboten auch vom Asta /I: ah cool/ also von der ?? Vertretung da Sachen angeboten so Modelle man konnt direkt richtig viel machen und direkt vor Ort wirklich also man hat was gemerkt was passiert hier gerade die Flüchtlinge kommen gerade am Bahnhof an man hat das so also man hatte direkt was was man sieht was man macht /I: jajaja/ das war natürlich richtig am Anfang hilfreich Politik ist ja oft sehr irgendwie abstrakt Du schreibst Anträge und die landen dann /I: ja ja ja/ irgendwo aber das war so was wo ich (I) wo ich gesehen hab was es für einen /I: ja/ Unterschied macht /I: ja/ das war also in dem Sinne vielleicht ein bisschen positiv sogar dass es da dass ich diesen Punkt erwischt habe um einzusteigen weil das halt auch motiviert hat

⁶⁴ Seyran: also ich geb ja auch selber Seminare (.) ähm: diesen Klick-Effekt den Leute haben /I: m-hm/ (.) also das is auch äh meine Motivation das nächste Seminar zu geben (.) weil man etwas anspricht wie Kapitalismus /I: ja/ und äh: zum Beispiel Umverteilung wie viel Geld Reiche haben wie viel Geld die: der Rest der Welt haben (.) ähm diesen Klick-Effekt bei den Leuten zu sehen wenn man denen erklärt woran das liegt (.) also ich hab mir mal sagen lassen ich sei ein witziger Typ (.) /I: m-hm/ wenn ich immer die Seminare gebe (.) und ich glaub das is halt einfach meine Stärke (.) /I: ok/ ähm: das Ganz mit Witz rüberzubringen

established the strongest organisational bonds and identities. These conflicts are of different sorts: Lisa and Marius report about ideological differences within the parties, which. Seyran, on the other hand, attributed this to a distance in milieu: he argued the others were “too picky, too academic”.

7.5.1.2 Expanding: between lineal and abeyant trajectories

Much in line with Crossley’s statement about how political activism leads to more political activism (2003, 47), all the activists considered expanding to other organisations. Lisa and Marius became passive members of JEF because Europe is an important priority for both. Seyran considered joining a political party but decided against it, partly because of timely pressures and partly because he wasn’t fully convinced by any of them. All the others have secondary or parallel affiliations.

Sarah, Anna, Juan and (to a lesser extent) Ludwig and Christian came around the middle of the spectrum between lineal and abeyant because they were actively looking for different possibilities, but they didn’t really abandon their organisations and they retained clear idea of what their main militancy was. Anna was strongly committed to her eco-path and even stated “this became my whole life” as she talked about how this shaped a big part of her identity and her social life growing up. Ultimately, her involvement led her to volunteering and even co-founding an environmental association. Anna is still committed to environmentalism even if at the time of the interview, she was more actively engaged in her LGTBQI and feminist activism. She connected her growing interest in feminism and her LGTBQI activism with personal and work experiences; she recognised that counselling young women about gender-based violence has made her much more aware of structural problems affecting women and girls, but she also connected this emphasis with her outing experience and her quest to assert her personal identity

Anna: (...) By now I have very good arguments and I have good videoclips to really say look at this, this (feminism) makes sense....So no, for me is not the case (she was talking about friends who claim feminism is no longer necessary) if you look into everyday life, and say ok I’ll do my heteronormative thing and I’ll adjust then you really don’t need it (feminism) because you don’t run against the boundaries because you fit into the system that’s my theory at least... and that has a lot to do with my outing... or it has changed since then, I no longer fit into the system⁶⁵.

Anna’s statement suggests that, in her view, assuming her sexual identity changed how society viewed her. Throughout the interview she mentioned a few situations in which this became clearer to her: being fired from a Catholic organisation because they considered “she wasn’t a good fit”; employers reacting

⁶⁵ Anna:Also und ich hab inzwischen echt gute Argumente ich hab gute Videoclips also um wirklich zu sagen hey guck dir’s mal an (.) das macht schon irgendwie Sinn (.) ja (.) nee (.) für mich nich (.) so also (.) ich ich: versteh’s auch nicht aber ich glaub wenn man so’n in so’n Alltag reingeht und einfach sagt okay ich mach jetzt mein heteronormatives Ding und ich bleibe angepasst dann braucht man’s wirklich nicht weil dann (.)/I: m-hm/ stößt man nicht so an diese ganzen Grenzen (.) weil dann passt man ins System (.) das ist so meine Theorie und ich (.) musste halt auch irgendwann weil das fällt eigentlich alles auch mit meinem Outing zusammen /I: m-hm/ oder seitdem wurde es anders (.) ich hab nicht mehr ins System gepasst und dann fängt es [00:39:04]

to her talking about her girlfriend or even her parents having a hard time accepting it. Anna's engagement has developed within what has been called NSM; environmentalism, LGBTQI and feminism. Within the field, she continued to move closer to contentiousness. Aside from her main activities with Women's Group, Anna continued engaging independently in environmental protests. Additionally, as part of her independent activities Anna told me she offered artistic workshops for refugee women, because even if this wasn't her main area of action, she felt the urge to act during the refugee crisis.

Sarah, on the other hand, wanted to engage somewhere where she could be creative and this was expectation was met at *Viva con Agua*. Even though the experience was good, she realised she wanted to combine this with groups with a stronger local emphasis

Sarah: I have been with *Viva con Agua* for about two and a half years (...) an organisation that (works for) providing drinking water and I am also working with Food Share on the side so (an organisation) where we rescue groceries (from waste) but then I felt like the issue of reducing waste was missing or plastic or something... so I felt like this is an increasingly salient topic and it really bothers me and I also like it when you can do something locally and with Food Share we do operate locally but it was somehow not enough I was missing something so with *Zero Waste* I really completed this⁶⁶

At the time of the interview, Sarah was spending more time working for *Zero Waste* but this was because they were in the process of getting registered as an association. She had strong commitments in both organisations, only *Food Sharing* didn't really provide chances for much networking. Even if she alternates, she remained within similar spaces in the SAF, namely, tending towards contentiousness and spontaneous activism and within organisations that overlap environmental issues, consumerist-critique and redistribution. Juan has grown within JEF and even took a leadership position. He has a strong organisational identity, but he still joined the student union at his college (and later became president). Besides this, he was exploring political parties because he wanted to engage for his main priorities; environmentalism, healthcare and inequality. His story resembles Ludwig's in that they have both have positive experiences within institutionalised participation, they both feel comfortable in positions of leadership and feel motivated to find a place for themselves within partisan structures. Moreover, through their first engagement they have both explored further interests and connected with activists outside their own groups. Ludwig's expansion is linked to personal reasons; he has joined LGBTQI networks because of his own sexual identity and has been looking for a political party because he sees

⁶⁶ Sarah: ich bin jetzt schon seit irgendwie über zweieinhalb Jahren auch schon bei Vega con Aqua dabei /IV: mhm/ sone Organisation mit Trinkwasserprojekte und mach auch noch Foodshare nebenbei ähm wo man dann Lebensmittel rettet /I: ja/ und aber irgendwie hatte mir noch so ein bisschen das Thema Müllvermeidung gefehlt /I: ja/ oder Plastik eben so diese Sachen wo ich das Gefühl hatte dass das einfach ein immer größeres Thema wird dass es mich sehr stört und ich find's halt auch toll wenn man was vor Ort machen kann /I: ja/ also bei Care Food Sharing machen wir auch vor Ort und so aber das ist irgendwie war mir noch zu wenig also (I) fehlte mir noch etwas und damit war es dann irgendwie bei *Zero Waste* und habe es ganz gut getroffen irgendwie (02.08)

himself as someone with strong leadership and deliberation skills. Ludwig and Juan have moved primarily within spaces of reproduction and professionalised activism with the caveat that Ludwig has links to some LGBTQI networks.

7.5.1.3 Moving sideways: Abeyant and experimental trajectories

Dilek and Thomas were the ones closest to abeyant and experimental trajectories. They have both moved within contentious networks, and according to their own statements, within a left-wing spectrum. They have in common enrolling at an organisation where they couldn't make a connection; him because of the organisational factors (the structure and the people) and her because of organisational and personal factors. As opposed to Dilek Thomas never joined a political party.

While Dilek's narrative suggests that she has developed a sense of place in the SAF of activism as well as consolidated her networks, practices, and ideas, she is the ideal-typical model for this pathway because of her intermittent engagement with the party. She does not see her interruptions as disengagement but as shifting towards independent and less frequent action. As already explored in the first chapter, she couldn't establish a shared identity with the group, partly because she experienced a language barrier and partly because of the organisational dynamic

When I started studying the local SDS campus group was relatively new, I mean the Left party's campus group... I was interested in that (the left party) and apparently there were some internal problems in the group, as I found out later and there were also language barriers quite simply... I didn't understand the discourses and I didn't have the impression that they were trying to integrate the newcomers because they were in their own bubble and so I abandoned the group pretty quickly... I was still politically interested and I did attend some demonstrations whenever I cared about something ...⁶⁷

Similar to Juan and Lisa, Dilek also felt she lacked some context specific cultural capital to really participate, even if she had been an informed teenager, she lacked what she called "abstract concepts". Besides this, she told me that she was uncomfortable with what she called "the lack of people with experience" and the lack of organisational harmony made her feel unwelcome. Dilek's experience reveals on the one hand her feeling of being outside because of the lack of this theoretical knowledge but also because of the lack of diversity and the lack of internal harmony in the group. Her disappointment was rooted in organisational and personal aspects. Likewise, her later return was explained with ideological, personal and organisational factors: on the one hand, she claims that the

⁶⁸ Ja ich glaub das ging relativ schnell dass ich angefangen habe mich auch selber dort zu engagieren ähm worüber ich mich halt damals auch aufgeregt habe war dass also sehr viel ähm über Antirassismus /I: mhm/ in der Gruppe diskutiert wurde mh dass aber sehr wenige Rassismus-erfahrene Menschen dort waren /I: ok ja/ ähm (13.44)

hat gelöscht: 1

personnel had changed, and the internal problems had been overcome, on the other hand she stressed her own advancement in political topics which made her feel more confident.

Yeah, sure that went relatively quickly that I started engaging there again... what enraged me at the time was that there was a lot of discussion about racism in the group but there were very few people with racism experience there⁶⁸

Yeah, so this was the problem and that's why it was important for me to be active and I think this initial hurdle that I encountered there the first time was no longer there... firstly, because the personnel had obviously changed and secondly because of my own readings and my own research I understood certain things better... so I understood some concepts better because I had dealt with them so it was no longer so difficult to be part of the group⁶⁹

During the time she was with the party, she was also a member of the student parliament and of a reading group for peoples of colour. She organised "safe spaces" at the university with her peers from the reading group. She combined her work with an official instance for student representation with numerous independent actions. Her decision to disengage for the second time is also linked a (macro) aspect; the public statements made by then party president Sarah Wagenknecht which led her to question her own support for this party and to "re-orient" politically. Throughout this time (until she returned) Dilek continued active in networks linked to capitalism-critique, environmentalism, anti-racism. Hence, she remained connected with spontaneous and contentious-leaning spaces in the SAF of young activism.

Thomas attributes a great part of his politicisation to the time spent with the university's student council and an enrolment to *Greenpeace*. Attracted by the big and spectacular actions that *Greenpeace* organises, he joined only to be quickly disappointed by the organisations. At first, he joined *Robin Wood*, an organisation that separated from *Greenpeace* but he realised he didn't want this organisational structure and, more importantly, he wanted to do something with his friends. His friends' networks became key in his activism, because he stressed that he knows people in different networks and supports causes with them. He told me about this as I asked him how he ended up with *Einfach Leben*

Thomas: I would say there was no concrete group. I was actually in *Greenpeace* I thought if I just come in, I'll engage at *Greenpeace* and they have these rigid structures and procedures and meetings every two weeks and I found this sort of interesting but it was clear, here everything is so pre-made, such a rigid structure a rigid organisation. And I didn't have the feeling that I could make a real contribution so I had more the idea that I would like to do something with my friends...better than engaging in *Greenpeace* or something like that with

68 Ja ich glaub das ging relativ schnell dass ich angefangen habe mich auch selber dort zu engagieren ähm worüber ich mich halt damals auch aufgeregt habe war dass also sehr viel ähm über Antirassismus /I: mhm/ in der Gruppe diskutiert wurde mh dass aber sehr wenige Rassismus-erfahrene Menschen dort waren /I: ok ja/ ähm (13.44)

69 B: Ja ja genau und das /I: ja/ war halt auch da das Problem und deswegen ähm war es mir damals wichtig mich selber auch irgendwie zu engagieren /I: ja/ und da aktiv zu werden und ich glaube diese erste Hürde also dass quasi meine die Hürde die ich beim ersten Mal hatte mit der Gruppe war so ein bisschen weg weil Punkt 1 die hatten sich auch personell natürlich geändert /I: mhm ja klar/ ähm und Punkt 2 war dass ich schon /I: mhm/ eigenes Lesen und Informieren ah bestimmte Sachen besser verstanden habe /I: ja/ also ich hatte bestimmte Begrifflichkeiten einfach schon drauf ah mit denen man sich so ah mal gebrüstet hat und ähm es war dann auch nicht mehr so schwierig für mich überhaupt so Teil der Gruppe /I: mhm/ zu werden

people you don't really get along with. In () we are close friends and we want to do this together.⁴

Dilek and Thomas were motivated by the image they had from their respective organisations; she had an interest in anti-racism and thought that this was the only party with an anti-racist agenda and Thomas was attracted to *Greenpeace's* because of the highly-mediatic actions. To some extent, they were both motivated by an interest in dissent and social critique, which was a contrast with Marius' self-declared wish to do something useful for society, or Ludwig's self-discovered leadership and rhetoric skills. Thomas realised he wanted to engage with people he liked, in other words have a better balance of activism and leisure but also that he wanted to create something and not reproduce an existing structure. This is, at least partly, why he established a connection between the story of his (brief) time with *Greenpeace* and the decision to start *Einfach Leben*.

These stories reveal the negotiation of personal and strategic aspects, but it is also about the expectations from activism; he expects less structure, less hierarchies, less insider deliberation, and more hands-on projects and actions. The expectations that activists described also connected with their early political socialisation, given that those who attributed a greater role to institutionalised spaces were more likely to frame their expectations in broader terms like a wish to contribute to society, as opposed to those who attributed a greater role to disperse experiences linked to specific issues, who often had more expressive and issue-linked expectations. These negotiations with the reality and the internal dynamics of the organisations; and in that sense, they also imply being able to find roles and factions within the organisation. Personal and emotional challenges were in fact an important part of their negotiations and the ultimate decision to stay or leave; whether they connect with the other activists, with the repertoires of action and in some cases, whether they manage to whether internal disputes and crises

As we talked about the challenges and costs of activism almost all activists mentioned time pressures; linked to having less time for studies, leisure, or even love: as I asked Seyran what would be different about him, if he hadn't the union, he mentioned numerous aspects and he laughed and said "I'd probably have a girlfriend by now". Thomas also commented on time pressures and argued that the intensity of his involvement had dropped since he faced the final stage of his PhD and then became a father and recognised that this, but also the growth of *Einfach Leben* into an association, had made him decrease the intensity of his activism. Beyond time pressures, all activists encountered challenges, but Anna was probably the one facing the greatest challenges at the time:

It is really a massive challenge to keep this group alive and I think the main point is we have been working together for a relatively long time (with changing line-ups) so it is like that many leave and new ones come

Besides facing the challenge of keeping the group alive, Anna stressed the competences and the type of work needed. To this, she revealed that she has found her strengths and the main ways she can contribute

to the group. She sees this as a constant learning that has not just revealed to her what she is good at, but also her own emotional endurance and the strength of her commitment to the group, the event and the causes of her activism

I can write good texts and do other things, so it is ok to split the work. The biggest experience is I am permanently learning small things so now we have this grant proposal, and the Facebook event is online so these are really big successes. But the greatest is really with the organisation team and the private story, that one can survive that and that one can separate this... because many people told me I mean friends and my therapist with whom I do coaching every now and then, because I said I can't do this with my ex and her new (girlfriend) and in this team ... but this is important to me but I have no overview anymore, I don't know who I am or what I am doing anymore (...) and they all told me just leave (the group) that is crushing you.. or bully them (so that) they drop out... they are assholes, you can't stay together in that constellation (...) but I didn't want to quit (...) and we are on a good path... it is not 100% harmony (...) we have gotten through (...) I made it and it is a cool experience to see if I want to do something I can do it (...) we couldn't have done it without supervision (...) ⁷⁰

Anna's story reflects on the one hand, conflicts that relate to the organisational structure and to the type of activism they are doing; being a basis-democratic group working with a topic that is directly linked to people's personal identity, she sees difficulties in reaching decisions. Secondly, Anna's struggles had to do with her own personal ties within the organisation: while having strong personal and emotional ties within the group was something that many interviewees regarded as a positive incentive to remain engaged and which has also been stressed by the literature as an important factor in retaining activists (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2020, Bunnage 2014) in her case, personal entanglements turned into an obstacle that endangered her permanence. Additionally, Anna's testimony being an interesting caveat to the role of identity and emotion in social movements; while many of the interviewees criticise that much of their political education was abstract and distant, Anna stressed the challenges that come with working with issues that are close to people's own personal identities. Interaction, reflection and change

7.5.2 Transformations.

The previous pages have presented an overview of how the activists entered the field of young activism, the spaces they have occupied and how they have made sense thereof. Moreover, the different types of

⁷⁰ Und ich kann dafür gut Texte schreiben und Sachen machen und so: und (.) äh also dass auch dass es okay ist das aufzuteilen(.) u:nd (.) also die größte Erfahrung ist jetzt also (.) ich lern permanent so kleine Sachen auch so oh wow jetzt haben wir den Antrag und der funktioniert oder jetzt /I: m-hm/ ist die Facebook-Seite online also das sind wirklich viele Erfolge die man sich da holen kann (.) aber das Größte ist tatsächlich jetzt mit dieser ganzen Orga: Privatgeschichte auch (.) dass man das überlebt und dass man das lösen kann weil mir haben ganz ganz viele Menschen gesagt Freunde und auch ne Therapeutin (.) mit der ich mich einmal hab coachen lassen weil ich gesagt hab ich kann das nicht mit meiner Ex und der Neuen und in diesem Team und das ist mir wichtig /I: m-hm ja/ aber ich blick überhaupt nicht mehr durch ich weiß überhaupt nicht mehr wer ich bin und was ich mache und so halt /I: ja/ (.) und die haben mir alle gesagt geh da raus mach das nich (.) das macht dich doch kaputt ist doch bescheuert (.) oder: die Alternative war mob die beiden da raus die sind ja voll arschig das macht man nich (.) man kann nich s- zusammenbleiben wenn so in der Konstellation und (.) das passt aber beides nicht irgendwie /I: m-hm/ das war immer noch ich wollte da nich rausgehen aber ich (.) [01:14:25] Und wir sind grad auf'm Weg es is noch nich 100 % nur pure Harmonie (...) wir können wieder miteinander arbeiten das heißt wir haben uns da durchgebissen (...) aber ich hab das geschafft (.) /I: ja/ äh äh wir haben das aufgelöst und das (.) ist find ich ne ziemlich coole Erfahrung zu merken wenn ich was machen will (.) dann: gibt's da Möglichkeiten /I: ja/ wir hätten das nich alleine geschafft aber mit Supervision

trajectories have been presented, along with differences in their political socialisation and first enrolment. Albeit following different trajectories and bringing different expectations, activists recognised that through the constant interaction with their given communities of action, they came to redefine their views, networks, expectations and gain context-specific cultural capital. Likewise, their testimonies suggest that they saw themselves as politically competent, having not only the know-how, but also the self- and external recognition of such competence.

Seyran was probably the one who most enthusiastically talked about how he'd changed since he became active in IGMJ. He claimed he was now a "different person" socially and ideologically. One of the main aspects he stressed was that he entered completely new social circles

Seyran: Sure, I think rhetorically I am pretty much advanced... and at the beginning in dealing with my environment I have changed a lot I think if you had met me five or six years ago you would think these are two different people. I experienced a real transformation in my life through the union, I gave up my circle of friends, with my girlfriend it wasn't going well anyway so I just said come on, let's just leave it... so I don't know there is a lot that changed⁷¹.

Seyran's statement could be a metonymy for much of his testimony; he gained rhetorical competence but also, general political competence (Bourdieu 1984). He gained new networks of friends but he also abandoned old ones; partly because he became very involved in the union and partly because of a profound shift in his values that brought him closer to these new circles. Additionally, he is also one of the activists who claimed that his values, and to some extent his views for the future, had changed. Still, he is by far not the only one who has been shaped in different ways by his political activism; on the contrary, the other activists also commented on how their engagement has shaped them as well and how they too, bring in their skills, experiences and concerns into their groups.

7.5.2.1 Context Specific Cultural Capital

The previous chapter enumerated some of the SAF's closing mechanisms, which were essentially given by the possession of specific forms of recognised cultural capital, but also very context specific cultural capital. Many of the activists talked about the use of complicated language, abstract concepts, and, to some degree claimed that ways of doing things in the SAF tended to be closer to the habitus of the middle classes. As they talked about their processes as activists, many of the interviewees referred to

⁷¹ Ja also ich glaub äh rhetorisch bin ich (.) viel weiter vorne /I: m-hm/ als ganz am Anfang (.) auch mit dem Umgang mit meinem mit meinem Umfeld bin ich ganz anders geworden (.) also ich f- ich (.) also ich glaub wenn wenn du mich vor fünf Jahren getroffen- oder vor sechs Jahren getroffen hättest und jetzt würdest du denken das wären zwei verschiedene Menschen (.) das is ich hab'n echt krassen Umschwung erlebt /I: m-hm/ einfach in meinem Leben durch die Gewerkschaft (.) also durch den ich m:ach kein Spaß /I: @.@/ also das ist wirklich das ist @.@ meine Kollegen is es wirklich ich hab meinen Freundeskreis komplett aufgegeben mit meiner Freundin lief dat nich mehr so gut da hab ich gesagt komm is ja jut @.@ also @.@ das is einfach (.) weiß ich nicht (.) also das: hat sich schon ziemlich (.) ziemlich verändert (.) ja [00:43:26]

different forms of context-specific cultural capital; many of these were cognitive (had to do with understanding internal procedures, learning about new political debates) and others were tactical (learning how to address different audiences, learning about different topics). Beyond this, some of the interviews suggested activists had also gained a symbolic dimension from these context-specific forms of cultural capital which granted them this form of self- and external recognition that Bourdieu conceptualised as “political competence”

As a member of a relatively unstructured group with horizontal proceedings, but also as a network activist, Thomas described the main skills he has gained

Actually, a lot... for example on the level of (using) encrypted emails and the whole issue of data security, I actually know all of this through my political activity... (to) use encrypted telecommunications or turning off the phone during meetings and discussions... those things to even think about those things, in this society, that is not so usual... and we are all buying Alexa or Google Home or Siri such things... these are all microphones... fucking shit... so I would say this whole thing with data security and data sovereignty I have from my political activity. Through this (political engagement) I have learned a lot about this (data security) and I have also learned that for good political work you need to debate a lot, this plenum culture... this exchange in plenum, what the discussion structure is and what it means to make consensus decisions. So, I think it is a broad learning field, these finding solutions together, as a group, and I think I learned this through my political engagement, to reach decisions as a group⁷².

By describing his growth, Thomas reveals types of practices he and the group routinely engaged in as well as his acquired taste for debate and deliberation. Besides this, he has changed his perception of everyday things like cell phones and social media as he gained awareness of the privacy risks that come with them. Interestingly, he stressed how this topic only became relevant through his activism, which implies an ongoing peer to peer socialisation and also situational adaptation. Lisa agrees with Thomas on the importance of rhetoric skills in activism, and, like him, she also reflects on her own growth. As she reflects on her own growth, Lisa’s testimony reveals a self-recognition as a competent interlocutor and one who has grown significantly through the activism. When I asked her about the competences she had needed for her activism and about her growth, she replied:

Well at first of course social skills and rhetoric (competence) I mean I know when I started, I know the first sessions I didn’t say anything I just listened and I had the feeling that the others

⁷² ja eigentlich ziemlich viel (.) /I: m-hm/ also zum Beispiel die Ebene von verschlüsselten E-Mails (.) /I: m-hm/ und diese ganze Frage von Verschlüsselung Datensicherheit usw. das weiß ich alles eigentlich nur aufgrund von politischem Hintergrund: Engagement (.) verschlüsselt tele-kommunizieren oder wenn man Besprechung hat Telefone raus (.) /I: m-hm/ solche Sachen dass man das überhaupt weiß dass man da überhaupt /I: ja/ in dieser Gesellschaft drüber nachdenkt find ich (.) das is ja nicht gang und gäbe und wir kaufen uns alle grade irgendwie: Alexa oder Google Home oder Siri /I: ja ja ja/ Sachen und so (.) das sind alles Mikrofone (.) /I: ja/ verdammte Scheiße (.) also sozusagen das würd ich sagen diese ganze Frage von Datensicherheit Datensouveränität /I: m-hm/ (.) oder so das hab ich das kommt viel aus politischem Engagement (.) und das is das hab ich viel dadurch gelernt und jetzt kann ich das (.) also das brauch man würd ich sagen /I: ja/ für’ne gute (.) äh: politische Arbeit auch (.) und auf der anderen Ebene ich glaube man muss halt ultraviel debattieren (.) /I: m-hm/ überhaupt so: so Plenumskultur dieses sich austauschen im Plenum und wie ist die die Absprachen-struktur was bedeutet irgendwie Konsensentscheide (.) also so ich glaube schon dass es’n extrem: n extremes Lernfeld is irgendwie (.) in’ner Gruppe: gemeinsame Lösungen zu finden /I: ja/ das hab ich glaub ich ganz stark durch politisches Engagement gelernt (.) gemeinschaftliche Entscheidungsfindung (.) /I: ja/ ja [00:54:12]

knew a whole lot and I know nothing but then you enter that's how it is...What you have to learn, you have to learn to argue, to discuss and then at some point to say something.... That is something where (I) have really improved, I realise every year that the JUSOS help me a lot with my self-esteem and how I perform rhetorically and how I talk...this has really gotten better and I feel confident to say something (...).⁷³

Lisa has not only connected with the party and found her place within it, but she has also gained a lot of context-specific cultural capital: on the one hand, she reflects upon the difficult organisational jargon as was exposed in the first chapter, and on the other hand, throughout the interview her confident explanations of internal procedures suggest that she has acquired that organisational-specific cultural capital that she claimed to lack at the beginning. Aside from learning to discuss and hold her views, Lisa's testimony also suggests that she gained deep knowledge about the organisation's structures and procedures and a belief in the correctness of their tactics. In that sense, both Thomas and Lisa gained different forms of organisation/ sector specific cultural capital that they derived from their sustained interaction. Like them, most of the other interviewees gained organisation- and content specific forms of cultural capital; understanding of current affairs and debates, they learned about organisational procedures and strategies as well. This cultural capital is connected to a symbolic aspect; recognising themselves and (partly) being recognised as competent.

7.5.2.2 Relationships

The interaction between activism and relationships is salient albeit differentiated among activists; some of them came to the groups with one or more people they knew (Lisa, Sarah, Anna, Juan), Thomas started a group with his friends, others have brought some of their friends into activism (Sarah, Lisa) and all of them made new friends and have an activist network.

Have you connected and made friends through your activism?

Well yeah, you spend so much time with each other that you can get to know each other pretty well relatively fast. And I mean the JUSOS are very big and I don't know anywhere near all of them... I obviously know those in the board of directors but I don't know if I know all of them. I think the JUSOS are very big and that is a disadvantage in this city and that was easier in Mannheim where you could have a list with the names and at least place a face to each name,

⁷³ I: Lisa: ja ähm also am Anfang halt schon soziale natürlich irgendwie Fähigkeiten also und auch auch Rhetoriksachen /I: mhm/ also ich als ich am Anfang angefangen habe ich weiß die ersten paar Sitzungen habe ich nichts gesagt ich saß da einfach nur hab zugehört und ich hatte das Gefühl alle anderen wissen total viel und ich weiß gar nichts /I: ok/ aber da kommt man halt rein also das ist halt schon was was man lernen muss man muss sich halt auch lernen auch zu streiten und auch mal irgendwie was zu sagen was jetzt vielleicht nicht irgendwie alle so sehen aber ähm also das das ist wirklich was was auch deutlich besser geworden ist /I: ja/ also ich merke jedes Jahr Jusos hilft mir also mein Selbstwertgefühl also wie ich rhetorisch auftrete wie ich rede das ist praktisch besser geworden ja und auch was ich mich traue zu sagen /I: ja/ ja das ist schon etwas allerdings sind das keine Voraussetzungen mit anzufangen /I: ja/ also ich alle die anfangen haben (.) komplett unterschiedliche Fähigkeiten und das ist auch am Anfang voll ok und das ist auch also wir haben jetzt auch ein Neumitgliederseminar wo auch Leute sitzen halt die wirklich gar nix sagen nichts sagen wollen das ist voll ok /I: jajaja/ die können dann einfach so lang da bei uns mitsitzen und immer kommen und wenn sie irgendwann mal was sagen wollen dann können sie also das ist so ähm man muss nichts können um dabei zu sein man kann eigentlich immer mitmachen und ja (1) das ist eigentlich so (17.02)

but here it is not the case... we have more like district groups and then at the municipal level there are some you spend more time with and you get to know better and with some I just work together⁷⁴.

Lisa's testimony reflected many of the experiences some of the other activists described; gaining not only friends who enter their private lives, but also becoming embedded in networks of activism, in particular within their own organisations or their own area in the SAF. For some of them, their new roles as activists brought changes to their previous relationships; Seyran claimed he basically switched to a new circle and the old friends he retained were sick of hearing him talk about contracts and inequalities. Juan also entered new and different networks and he told me that his political competence was recognised by some of his friends who turned to him with their questions about electoral issues

Seyran: wow my other friends, the ones who are not in the union, they hate me for this... that we go for a drink and I'm always blabbing about this (the union) (they say) I have no other passion in my life...because I am totally focused on this and that's annoying for my other friends⁷⁵

Juan: well, a lot of my friends do ask me like hey, so what's that about? First vote? Second vote? And like what's going on with these things...? But also, I have a whole new network (...)⁷⁶

Interestingly, both Juan and Seyran observed changes in their relationships; for Seyran it was that he took distance but also that there were disagreements because they didn't share his interest, and Juan became recognised for the cultural capital and the role he had gained through his activism. Both of them perceived changes in how their friends saw them and linked this change to their new role as activists and their expanded interests.

The statements about the newly gained networks suggest that the type of organisation (size, level of structuration, orientation) influences the development of their activist networks; Lisa, Marius, Seyran and Christian all belong to large and highly structured organisations, and they have mostly networked within the organisational structures. Juan sees his personal and activist networks as "two parallel worlds"

⁷⁴ B: Mh mh gut also (1) ja man man verbringt unglaublich viel Zeit miteinander /I: mhm/ au- automatisch und lernt sich eigentlich relativ schnell ganz gut kennen (.) und ähm die Jusos können natürlich unglaublich groß als ich kenne nicht mal annähernd alle Jusos also ich kenne jetzt einige im Vorstand und ich glaube nicht mal mich kennen alle obwohl also so weißt schon aber ich kenn auch nicht mal also es ist einfach zu groß /I: mhm/ das ist natürlich ein Nachteil bei den Jusos (Stadt) muss ich schon sagen wir sind extremst groß ich glaube es wäre also es war einfacher in Mannheim weil das einfach kleiner ist /I: ja/ weil weniger Jusos man konnte man hatte eine Liste man hatte wirklich jeden Einzelnen so ein bisschen nach dem Gesicht im Kopf das ist halt hier leider nicht so aber ähm (2) ja man hat man hat immer in Gruppen also wo man mal so im Stadtbezirk jetzt in (Bezirk) z. B. eine Gruppe oder auf Jusos (Stadt)-Ebene klar es gibt da so ein paar ja einzelne Gruppen die sich da auch gebildet haben wo man mit denen man mehr Zeit verbringt /I: mhm/ mit manchen verbringe ich weniger Zeit die kenne ich nicht so gut aber mit denen arbeitet man einfach zusammen (.) mhm genau ja (33.16)

⁷⁵ Seyran: meine Freunde die nicht von der Gewerkschaft sind /I: ja/ hassen mich dafür dass /I: @.@/ wenn wir trinken gehen oder so dass ich nur: darüber laber (.) /I: immer ja/ nur (.) also das is ich hab halt keinen anderen Lebenssinn @/(?als momentan?) (.) /I: @.@/ weil ich mich halt wirklich komplett darauf fokussiere so (.) und äh: das stört schon (.) also bei den anderen Freunden [00:13:01]

⁷⁶ Juan: Ja, also viele meiner Freunden fragen mich schon so hey wie sieht es aus? Erst Wahl, zweite Wahl? Erste stimme zweite stimme.... Wie ist das dann? und so zum Beispiel oder man hat mmm ein ganz anderes Netzwerk...

whereas Dilek and Thomas have become embedded within activist networks that are not restricted to a specific organisation or even to a single-issue cause, and the lines between personal and activist networks appear more blurred.

The testimonies about their networks suggest a perceived similarity; whether it is because they can establish personal connections within the spaces of activism, or because they can accomplish working relations with their peers and recognise shared goals and values. Moreover, the connections they establish are also “linked” to their trajectories in activism; whether it is because they have been active in different issue-segments, or because they have moved between cities or even between organisations.

7.5.2.3 Changing views

Most activists described their changing views of themselves and to social and political issues. Almost all activists reported about having experienced personal growth, stronger self-esteem, becoming more empathetic and assertive, improved social and rhetoric competence, increased interest in political themes. In that sense, the majority recognised changes in how they viewed themselves. Likewise, many others (Seyran, Juan, Marius, Thomas, Christian) described that they changed their views of specific social or political issues, but also their ways of reading the political and societal debates in general. In this line, many claimed that they had become more open minded.

As described in the previous pages, Seyran was the one who most vehemently talked about his change through activism even if he wasn't alone in this. He described how he had gained more competence and even developed his own strategies to communicate with his peers. As we were talking about how things have changed since he joined the union, Seyran talked about his tight schedule and also how his mentality had changed

Sure, it's a bit full... and then you don't really have time for family and friends, and you try to spend every free minute with them, and you realise that you change.... So back then, I... I wasn't a homophobic but I thought like ok, this shouldn't be and now I see this completely differently... when it comes to homosexuality, for example, also since I moved here... it is normal... and in the Ruhr area these were values I didn't have, and these came through the union and then the social thinking was strengthened, like this why is a homeless person

homeless? Why is the society oppressed or why does something like this happen, like someone is homeless...? I used to think that's just a bum...⁷⁷

Similarly, Juan described himself as „more sensitive” to political issues and information; he argued that he became accustomed to consulting different news sources, questioning the sources of political information and taking more nuanced views

Juan: well, I am thinking about joining a political party soon.... But in general, you become more sensitive and also more you consciously learn to deal with the media more critically and not just like... “Angela Merkel needs to go!” that's a thing now, (you rather ask) why? Because you become more sensitive... so when you listen to the radio you watch out for (news about) Europe and politics... and this is directly interesting right? So, you are awake right there (if you hear Europe, Politics) and if you see this on Facebook too⁷⁸

Christian and Sarah described similar experiences of change; they were both interested in environmentalism and human rights and through their volunteering experiences and their activism, these interests became stronger. Additionally, they both claimed to have become much more critical of consumerism and embraced less materialistic values and goals

I became even more interest in these topics, energy sustainability, environmental problems, and so I also tried to change my behaviour (...) I started eating less meat, buying more consciously and then to be better informed...Yeah you find some very... not so affluent contexts abroad and then you no longer think that having my own car, my own house are the most important things, and there has been a similar effect of the work with *Greenpeace*⁷⁹

In his case, as in Sarah's, the change wasn't complete, but rather activism strengthened some of the already existing views. Sarah says about her consumption “I was never a shopping queen.”. To some extent, their views, in particular their critical consumerism is something that was latent and became stronger through activism. Through their engagement, they also experienced and lived their values and

⁷⁷ Seyran: das da'n bisschen voll (.) und man hat halt nich wirklich viel Zeit für Familie und Freunde (.) und man versucht halt die wirklich jede freie Minute dann irgendwie so mit denen zu verbringen aber man merkt schon (.) dass man sich ändert (.) /I: m-hm/ also ich hab damals (.) ich ich war nich homophob (.) aber: ähm ich hab mir gedacht okay (.) das muss jetzt nich sein (.) /I: ja/ so und jetzt denk ich halt komplett anders darüber ich bin (.) also wenn wenn man jetzt das Thema Homosexualität nimmt beispielsweise (.) auch dadurch dass ich nach Stadt gezogen bin und das is auch nochmal'n ganz /I: ja/ (?Bild?) wie im Ruhrgebiet (.) ähm: nimmt man das einfach als das is halt nor- das is normal und man nimmt es dann halt auch so wahr (.) ne? /I: ja/ und das hab ich halt alles das sind so Werte die ich damals halt nich hatte im Ruhrgebiet (.) und die: durch die Gewerkschaft dann nochmal bestärkt wurden auch das Sozialdenken (.) dass man einfach denkt so (.) ja der: warum warum ist denn der Obdachlose obdachlos? so (.) /I: m-hm/ ne? warum warum drückt die Gesellschaft oder warum f- passiert sowas dass jemand obdachlos ist früher hab ich immer gedacht das is einfach nur'n Penner (.) /I: ja/ @.@ und jetzt de- ja das is das is halt /I: ja/ (?wirklich manchmal so?) ne? [00:12:26]

⁷⁸ Juan: tja mmm ich überlege gerade bei einer Partei bald beizutreten ... man ist ja viel sensibler weil mmm ganz bewusst auch kristlich mit men medien umzugehen... und nicht so... mm Angela Merkel muss jetzt weg, das ist gerade aktuell sondern warum? Wieso? Weil man sensibler wird... und wenn man Radio hört sucht man direkt Europa oder Politik... mmmm dann interessier man sich direkt... na? Wird man direkt wach so wenn man das hört oder auf Facebook sieht oder so

⁷⁹ erneuerbare Energien Nachhaltigkeit (.) ähm: Umweltprobleme etc. ähm: und hab dann auch ähm: nach und nach versucht mein eigenes Verhalten n bisschen umzustellen und ähm (.) hab m- immer mehr gesagt so quasi: ähm: (...) hab irgendwann angefangen (.) weniger Fleisch zu essen: ähm (.) bewusster einzukaufen /I: m-hm/ und so weiter und äh mich zu informieren verstärkt und (.) ja man lernt eben (.) ja auch nicht so reiche Verhältnisse eben kenne zum Beispiel im: Ausland ähm (.) ja und (.) genau denkt vielleicht nicht mehr ähm: (.) dass das Auto das eigene Auto das eigene Haus am wichtigsten sind und sowas (.) ähm (.) genau und ähm ja und ich glaub'n ähnlichen Effekt hat auch die Arbeit bei Greenpeace [00:39:09]

their conscious consumerism within a community of like-minded people. Besides Christian and Sarah, Anna had also become a more critical consumer.

Next to Seyran, Anna is probably the one interviewee who attributed more of her personal transformation to her activism. When she talked about her first enrolment in the eco-path, she claimed “this became my whole world”. She claimed this gave her a different sense of identity, a different role in her peer groups, environmental awareness and even her first interest in electoral issues. Her environmental activism as a teenager triggered an important motivation which connected her with networks and led to instances of leadership and activism. Anna sees a direct connection between her engagement, her volunteering at an environmental education centre and her decision to become an educator

Yeah, that was an education centre and that’s how I ended up becoming an educator because there (at the education centre) I lead the groups and there I did, for the first time, I did this lobbying... we did these “water excursions” and discovering the forest and then cooking like in the middle-ages and this whole thing, like what does it mean to live the way we do?⁸⁰

Did anything change since you starting engaging? Your relationships with your family or friends?

Well that all started when I was fourteen and I was in the seventh grade and before that I had been at the new school for two years, and I was quite the outsider... I had already found my peer group* which I had until I was about 20 or 21... so (I was) in this eco-world and then this feeling that I can (convince/ attract) people and then I didn’t care about the others... because they weren’t present, I was in my own bubble ... So, I was no longer meeting people at parties who I found weird and who also found me weird and what really changed a lot was the relationship to my siblings who found me totally uncool...⁸¹

At the time, this gave her sense of place: from seeing herself as an outsider, she went on to see herself as an “eco-hippie” in her own “eco-world”. This, in sum, not only shaped her teenage years but influenced her mindset, priorities and lifestyle. She linked these experiences in environmentalism to further aspects of her lifestyle; one, that she is a conscious consumer and tries to live as sustainably as possible, second that she chooses to work part-time so that she has time for activism, she chooses to live close to nature and to engage in different initiatives. The transformations that she links to her own

⁸⁰ Anna: da bin ich auch drauf gekommen Diplom-Pädagogin zu werden /I: aha/ oder halt überhaupt Pädagogin zu werden weil ich da halt Gruppen geleitet hab das erste Mal das war wirklich diese /I: ah:/ Lobbyarbeit mit (.) wir hatten Wasser-Exkursionen Fledermaus-Exkursionen und (.) Wald entdecken und Kochen wie im Mittelalter aber alles mit diesem Aspekt auch was bedeutet das so wie /I: ja/ wir grade leben? [00:09;28]

⁸¹ Anna: (.) das fing so also es fing mit vierzehn an (.) und (.) davor ich war das war se- siebte Klasse: und davor war ich zwei Jahre auf der neuen Schule da war ich ne ziemliche Außenseiterin das heißt ich hab da schon meine (?queegroup?) gefunden? /I: m-hm/ und hab die auch behalten dann bis (.) dahin und ich glaub ich war mit 20 21 schon so (.) so in meiner (.) Ökowitz dann auch drin und und in mein meinen Überzeugung dass ich [Geschirreklapper] einfach dann: die Leute angezogen hab also dann waren die anderen gar nicht mehr Thema weil die waren gar nicht mehr so da (.) /I: ja/ in meiner Blase direkt also dann (.) irgendwie: ergibt sich das dann ja auch so (.) ich hab dann auf (.) Partys halt keine komischen anderen @Menschen mehr kennen gelernt@ /I: ja/ die mich auch komisch finden (.) was sich tatsächlich verändert hat ist das Verhältnis zu meinen Geschwistern die mich massivst uncool fanden

activism resemble some of the previous findings of social science literature; that sustained activism can lead to people choosing careers in education and care professions, that it can lead to working part-time or postponing family decisions (McAdam 1989). Additionally, she connected her feminist and LGBTQ engagement with her current job and her professional interests and worldview.

Anna claimed that her decision to work part-time was connected to her activism, hobbies and her wish to live a more sustainable lifestyle

I wouldn't be able to organise this (organisational event) if I were working full-time. I don't think I would manage... at least not if I still wanted to sing in a choir and commute... then I wouldn't be able to do anything else⁸².

As she told me this, Anna mentioned that she lived outside the city because she liked to have space to paint, which is an important hobby for her, and to be close to places where she could ride horses. Additionally, she also recognised that conscious consumerism, which was very important for her, also requires time. Anna's statement revealed that she had, as well, adopted less materialistic values and that this was (in her view) linked to activism.

The testimonies exemplify how interviewees described their changing views on different topics like homosexuality, poverty (Seyran), consumerism (Anna, Sarah and Christian), their own roles and identities (Anna), and also changing views about themselves, their own competences and social skills. Social competence, assertiveness and openness to other people's views, were mentioned by most activists

Lisa: Really important is social competence, by now people speak about social intelligence also being able to consciously enter social interaction and maybe direct it or adapt to it, also self-reflection... I have also further developed, I mean I have strong positions in some issues but I am not sectarian* and I try to question myself () empathy is very important in politics, one of the most important things along with assertiveness or so, that works when you

⁸² Anna: U:nd das fällt mir auch grade noch ein weil ich könnte nicht das () organisieren wenn ich Vollzeit arbeiten würde (.) ich würde das nicht schaffen glaub ich (.) /I: m-hm/ also zumindest nicht wenn ich auch noch im Chor singen will und noch pendele und also dann könnt ich wirklich nichts anderes mehr machen deshalb (.) /I: ja klar/ das ist so wichtig für Aktivismus Zeit zu haben [00:46:50]

understand your interlocutor and take them seriously and discuss them on an appropriate level⁸³.

Lisa's emphasis on openness and empathy is also echoed by other activists, like Marius, Seyran, Thomas and Juan. In a similar line, Ludwig connected his time as a school speaker and student union president (as well as his social engagement) to his view of himself as a leader and as someone who is good at working with people and enjoy attention:

Ludwig: So, as I mentioned, I mmm realised I have leadership skills, that's part of my... I like it... and I like mediating and having people's attention⁸⁴

Interestingly, Ludwig saw his leadership skills as a consequence of his engagement at school and university (or least, this is how he came to realise this about himself) but also as a motivation to continue and to explore other possibilities for activism.

7.5.2.4 Redefining the past and the future

These testimonies present the activists' views of the transformations they connect to their activism; gaining cultural capital, changing and expanding networks, changing views of social/ political issues but also of themselves. Additionally, many of them had reframed and re-interpreted different aspects of their lives; some of them reframe and re-interpret the past, and some the views for their future.

Seyran, Dilek, Anna and Thomas explicitly stated that they had experienced forms of inequality in the past. Seyran and Thomas discussed their experiences arguing that they have come to realise that what they experienced were forms of discrimination and social exclusion; Seyran mentioned that, before joining the union, he got mad but didn't really know to frame this within structural and political contexts.

⁸³ Also ganz wichtig ist soziale Kompetenz /I: mhm/ äh oder äh jetzt spricht m-mittlerweile spricht man ja von sozialer Intelligenz /I: ja/ ähm also bewusst auch soziale Interaktion wahrzunehmen vielleicht auch sie zu steuern beziehungsweise sich drauf einzustellen ähm das hat einen weitergebracht die Selbstreflektiertheit /I: ja/ die ich auch immer mehr und mehr entwickelt habe also ich hab klar ich hab starke Positionen oder habe Positionen in bestimmten Bereichen aber ich bin auch nicht festgefahren und versuche mich selber zu hinterfragen ähm sich in Leute hinein zu fühlen /I: ja/ also Mitgefühl oder Empathie ist ganz wichtig äh in der Politik ähm sind die wichtigsten /I: mhm/ das kann man viel noch sagen mit mit Machtgefühl oder Durchsetzungsstärke oder so aber wenn wenn das andere funktioniert also wenn man sein Gegenüber versteht /I: ja/ wenn man ihn ernst nimmt wenn man mit ihm diskutiert auf ner auf ner guten Ebene äh in in in nem Umfeld was es ihm auch gewährleistet genauso zu diskutieren mit mir also wenn man äh den äh es gibt so nen Philosophen der hat so Diskussionsgrundlagen aufgelegt also ich weiß nicht wer er war also auf jeden Fall wenn man diesen Regeln folgt und ne ne Diskussion auf Augeneben- Augen-äh-höhe führt und versucht halt sich auf Argumente einzustellen die einem der gegenüber bringt und ähm lösungsoffen ist also immer /I: mhm/ das ähm Wohl der Gesellschaft im Kopf behält als als gemeinsames Ziel dann braucht man auch keine anderen Fähigkeiten also man muss einfach den Menschen /I: mhm/ so nehmen wie er ist und mit ihm interagieren das ist das Wichtigste (1.02.39)

⁸⁴ Ludwig: (...)ja wie gesagt... ich habe eine Führungspersönlichkeit...oder ja mir macht das Spaß... und auch ich mag diese Vermittlungs- mm Rollen... und Menschen organisieren...ich mag es im Mittelpunkt zu sein(...)

Seyran even lamented that, as he says, his politics classes at school didn't really illustrate them about his rights and about everyday discrimination. Similarly, Dilek and Thomas also came to frame their experiences as discrimination, and this became an important part of their motivation and their contentiousness.

Thomas (I have been interested in) educational inequalities... that's really important to me because of my origin...because I come from the countryside, a very humble rural origin and sure, that's the classical story of the ascension through education but throughout this ascension I have experienced things that, at least retrospectively, I would interpret as discrimination. I didn't understand this before but now I would count these as experiences of discrimination.⁸⁵

Seyran: At the time I didn't really interpret this so much as bullying... at the time I just thought alright then... that was that. But by now, since I did these rhetoric courses, I have come to realise that this was a bad case of bullying.⁸⁶

Seyran and Thomas both acknowledge that they have further developed and incorporated different forms of cultural capital. The re-interpretation of past experiences of discrimination (either racism, classism or both) is something they connect to their political competence and the ability to frame such situations as power dynamics. In that sense, they identify this reinterpretation of the past as a result of their activism but also as a trigger (motivation) for further engagement. These stories are like Anna's and Dilek's; Dilek's views were strongly shaped by the intersectional condition of being a young, working-class person of migrant descent in a highly stigmatised neighbourhood. Anna, on the other hand, claimed she had the feeling she was fired from a job for being a lesbian, and also argued how much her counselling job had impacted her. Both women came to frame these experiences as power dynamics and within political discourses. These interpretations, as in the case of Seyran and Thomas, are consequences and causes for engagement.

As a caveat to these stories, Marius interpreted his own life-story as an example of social mobility in Germany. As he talked about the composition of the partisan groups (and the over-representation of middle-class and university educated milieus) he argued that while that is indeed the norm in the city, his town was different, and he considered that it is possible to overcome the hurdles

Marius: Well that's the average case in Germany. Of course, my town is different because people with university education were a minority, I'm the first one in my family. I'm the classical worker-milieu kid: (son of) a painter and a child's nurse, these are not exactly the most affluent and the most educated people... That's why I don't understand why these milieus

⁸⁵ Thomas: (Ich habe mich viel mit) Bildungsungleichheit (beschäftigt) für mich ist es sehr relevant dass ich auch aus'm sehr einfachen Haushalt komme (.) also vom Bauernhof sag ich immer /I: m-hm/ (??) stimmt genauso auch (.) und das ist so: der die klassische Idee des Bildungsaufstiegs habe und ich glaube in dieser klassischen Idee des Bildungsaufstiegs auch Dinge erlebt habe (.) zumindest würde ich das im Nachhinein so interpretieren früher war mir das nicht bewusst (.) die ich heute als Diskriminierungserfahrung

⁸⁶ Seyran: das hab ich während dessen hab ich dieses Mobbing gar nicht so krass wahrgenommen das war für mich einfach so ja komm lass die Spasten mal machen so (.) /I: ah krass/ und im Nachhinein erst /I: m-hm/ hab ich das nämlich so ah: das ist doch total das krasse Mobbing als ich so Rhetorikkurse und so hatte (.) dassis doch wirklich so (.) [(?) ist das so:

(feel they can't ascend). I can't because I am the example that it is possible, you just need to give people self-confidence and know-how.⁸⁷

In regard to the future, activism and their political values shape how they project their expectations. Either because they wish to turn this hobby into a profession, or because they wish to shape their lifestyle in such a way that it is coherent with their values, but also because they all saw activism as an important part of their lives and identities and wanted to remain active in the future.

For Seyran, Ludwig, and Marius activism has also opened a different possibility for their professional future; Seyran would like to work for the union, whereas Marius and Ludwig admitted they had considered going into professional politics. Conversely, Thomas and Dilek don't want to turn their hobby into a profession, but they do consider that their political engagement has shaped their mindset and values and they wouldn't like to work in (realms) that contradicts these values:

Dilek: I couldn't imagine working for a journal like die Bild. Regardless of the payment I couldn't just say I separate this from my political interest because that (the journal) is the complete opposite of who I am and what I believe as a person...even the choice of studies means that I have opted for certain things... I am willing to make compromises I guess we all have some financial pressure and I know it's not always so nice and fun like when you are studying, I know if I ever want to start a family, I will have to deal with large sums ... I would be willing to work for an organisation like Amnesty International (...) I have some criticism towards Amnesty I mean they do important work but I don't support everything they do but I would still be willing to work with them.⁸⁸

Seyran had repeatedly stressed the profound impact that the union has had on his personal life and his values so it wasn't surprising that he also mentioned how the union had altered his professional goals:

(about his professional expectations) definitely no longer (working) for a capitalist enterprise. Right now, I am forced to do this because I have nothing else, but my dream is obviously to turn my hobby into a profession

⁸⁷ Marius: Es ist allgemein ist das so ähm also wenn man das im Durchschnitt sieht /I: ja klar/ jetzt natürlich in im Dorf wo ich herkomm ist das anders weil da halt die wenigsten Leute studiert haben /I: mhm/ ich bin auch der Erste aus meiner Familie der studiert ich bin quasi das typische Arbeiterkind Maler und Kinderkrankenschwester sind jetzt nicht diejenigen die halt super viel Geld verdienen und super viel Bildung haben ähm und deswegen verstehe ich auch nicht warum genau diese Schichten /I: jajaja/ ich kann nichts machen weil ich aus meiner Sicht ein direktes Beispiel bin dass es funktioniert man muss das ist das Wichtige man muss den Leuten einfach dieses Selbstvertrauen geben muss wissen

⁸⁸ Doch also ich könnte mir zum Beispiel natürlich nicht arrr vorstellen für eine Zeitung wie die Bild zu arbeiten also da wäre mir da wäre mir auch der Verdienst egal das äh /I: mhm/ ich könnte nicht sagen ich mach das und trenn das von /I: ja/ meinem politischen Interessen weil das letztlich so das komplette Gegenteil von dem ist ähm was ich als Person denke und dazu ich schon alleine so ein Studienfachauswahl (2) heißt ja schon dass ich mich äh für bestimmte Sachen entschieden habe ich wäre aber kompromissbereit also ich /I: mhm/ glaube halt natürlich wir haben alle finanziellen Druck und es ist auch nicht immer alles so schön und lustig /I: mhm/ wie als Studierende ich weiß auch dass ich irgendwann mal (2) eventuell ne Familie habe und ähm mich auch mit größeren Summen beschäftigen muss und könnte mir auch vorstellen vielleicht (2) weiß ich nicht bei einer Organisation wie zum Beispiel Amnesty International zu arbeiten /I: mhm/ die ich (2) so nicht unterstützen würde /I: ok/ also ich habe inhaltliche Schwierigkeiten mit Inte- äh Amnesty International trotz all dem was sie machen so /I: ja/ ne also sie machen wichtige Arbeit /I: mhm/ ich habe trotzdem Kritik dran /I: ja/ würde da aber natürlich trotzdem arbeiten /I: ok/ also /I: klar/ (52.16)

As he told me this, Seyran stressed how important issues like inequality, redistribution and solidarity have become for him and how he would like to be coherent with these values and, at some point work full-time for the union.

The narratives about activism describe this as an ongoing process which the interviewees connect with different aspects of their lives: it is not just because of them trying to balance the sphere of life (Passy and Giugni 2001) or trying to achieve “coherence” between their lives and their values (Ruiz-Junco 2011) but they also stress the changes that activism has brought to their everyday lives and self-perception. To different extents and in varying intensity, all the interviewees recognised themselves as activists and felt confident talking about what they considered to be important skills and assets in political action. Furthermore, they all recognised that their action within activist groups and the interaction with other activists brought changes into their lives; in their self-perception, in their networks, their opinions and priorities, plans for the future, and in some cases in some of their everyday habits.

Likewise, the testimonies also suggest that interviewees not only identified how they have been shaped by their activism, but how they also shape these spaces; by bringing in their friends, by bringing in their style (Seyran’s humour), skills (Anna’s pedagogic profile, her artistic skills and comfort with languages or Sarah’s web-design skills), their interpretations of political issues (Juan insisted on the work of making European procedures tangible for youngsters) their visions for activism (Thomas co-started *Einfach Leben* based on very specific ideas of what such a group should do and what this should mean for activists’ lives) and even some of their friends (Lisa, Sarah). Hence these interactions occur among actors that are constantly changing and influencing one another.

While most of them mentioned learning new skills, gaining new networks and routines, or becoming more critical and open-minded as the changes they see in themselves, some of the concrete aspects of these changes and these acquired forms of (cultural and social) capital were more directly linked to the organisations and sectors they moved in: Lisa and Marius revealed profound understanding of internal partisan structures, Christian learned about the (in his words) complex organisational structure behind *Greenpeace*, but also learned the practices and ways in which the organisation acts, whereas Thomas and Dilek stressed that they have become embedded within networks different issue areas.

The descriptions of their routines within the organisations, revealed that they have not only learned how to work within these groups (or how to move within certain spaces in the SAF) but also how to respond and act in a way that is coherent with their networks and their acquired frames and forms of cultural capital (what Crossley termed ‘coherent deformation’):

We have these topics that we explain at schools... but we are flexible... so there was this time we wanted to talk about migration, but the pupils wanted to talk about protest because of FFF... so we talked about the police regulations and protests and FFF

Juan's anecdote revealed that he didn't merely memorise and reproduce topics and actions, but he was able to interpret the audience, and the type of themes and actions that JEF stands for, in order to respond with an initiative that is coherent with the organisation's topics. Similarly, Ludwig told me about the coordinated decision to invite an expert to discuss right-wing extremism at the university

We started a series of political events... and we invited an expert... the thing is, it came out that one of the lecturers is a member of the AfD in (city) and apparently, he even has a high position... So, this was a little bit complicated and we thought it would be a good idea to address this

Like Juan, Ludwig had to interpret a specific situation and engage in action that was consistent with his role, but also with the type of activities that the student unions engage in. Like Ludwig and Juan, the other activists also revealed that they attempted to act (and deliberate) in ways that were consistent with their interpretation of the group, of their spaces in the SAF of activism, of the types of actions and frames of cognition that are coherent with their groups.

The interviews suggest that the activists have gained on the one hand some of the skills deemed necessary such as rhetoric competence, open-mindedness, organisational skills, but also some very organisational (or sector-specific) skills. Among the later, the interviewees mentioned encrypted messaging, drafting internal proposals, organising clothing exchanges, using social media to promote events, offering DOI workshops, organising demonstrations, using gender-sensitive language, leading a group, workers' contracts, European budgetary rules, etc. Beyond this, they all report about becoming more competent in specific topics (such as inequality, capitalism-critique, racism, feminism, European Union, labour, environmental problem, waste etc.).

Albeit differently, all activists recognise being shaped by their political engagement. Besides gaining different forms of cultural and social capital, and beside incorporating certain frames of cognition, routines and strategies, the narratives suggest that activists have in common a shared belief in the goods at stake. Moreover, in their statements they all recognise themselves as *politically competent* actors in a sense like Bourdieu's understanding of this concept (1992); that is, a political competence that displayed in their gaining context specific cultural and social capital, but also because they are (through their sustained interaction and adoption of roles) recognised as competent voices within these circles. In Bourdieu's terms, this could be expressed as activists having gained a certain context-specific symbolic capital or social credit (Girling 2006). Lastly, they share an *illusio*; they share a belief in themselves as politically competent actors having a place within a local SAF of young activism and they share a belief in the sense of organising, of attempting to generate social change and to gain support for their causes.

In that sense, their transformations and the incorporation of activism can be labelled an activist habitus; because has shaped their way of thinking, dispositions, networks, routines, etc. Concretely, this activist habitus takes from Crossley's conceptualisation (2002, 2003, 2004) and is defined by perceptive schemes, know-how to bring their concerns into action, an ethos that believes in and encourages engagement (a belief in the goods at stake and in the point of the game) and a feel for protest and organizing which allows them to gain fulfilment and enjoyment from it. Furthermore, Crossley defines the activist habitus as one that is shaped by self-reflection (separating from what he considers a deterministic element in Bourdieu) and constant socialisation within political issues. In this view, the activist habitus is not just about (cognitive) learning, but about developing a taste for political discussions, actions and activities which can lead the subjects to continue exploring, engaging, and framing discussions politically and within their own explicatory narratives. In that sense, they all developed a form of activist habitus. Still, the ways in which they live and understand their activism is differentiated and strongly patterned by their experiences and the type of activism they militate in.

7.6 Activist habitus: The two dichotomies, ideal typical combinations

The previous sub-chapters have explored the activists' narratives about their own trajectories in activism; the actors and events they connect to their political socialisation, to their enrolment and their development within the SAF of young activism. The interviewees reported about differentiated activist trajectories, but they all saw this as an important part of their lives. The testimonies reveal that activists saw activism as an ongoing process in which their views, their motivation and their engagement was shaped by personal, organisational, and structural factors. These stories revealed that they saw themselves within these constant interactions and this led to constantly reflect about their priorities and expectations, and about the ways in which they have been shaped by their sustained activism. The interactions between their lives and activism (the transformations) they link to their sustained activism are here conceptualised as an activist habitus, closer to Crossley's (2003, 2004) conception.

The analysis suggests that the interviewees share a belief in the game; a conviction that thinking politically, deliberating, and collectively acting is some worthwhile. Furthermore, they express a belief in their own interpretations of politics and social problems and in the importance of disseminating these ideas. Moreover, they connected their activism with gaining context-specific cultural capital (cognitive and tactical) as well as significant changes in their networks, activities, views (of themselves and social matters), and interpretations of their lives (past and future expectations). The different actors and events they associated with these changes, suggested that they see their activism as a process that didn't happen overnight but one that is in continuous development through interaction with their peers, their contexts, and the field. As the previous sub-chapter explained, the testimonies suggest that all activists recognised changes through sustained action, but the types of routines, the types of networks they connected to and

the types of frames they adopted were in fact differentiated; Thomas learned to use encrypted emails and learned how to reach consensus decisions, while Lisa and Marius learned how to draft proposals and to work within partisan procedures. Likewise, some activists became embedded into more dispersed networks, while others mostly connected within their organisations. The differentiated ways in which they developed, and the underlying differences about the goal of activism, are the base for the conceptualisation of different types of activist habitus.

The differentiated spaces and practices in this local SAF of youth activism were given along two axes, reproduction- contention and professional- spontaneous. The organisations and activists were positioned within these axes based on their statements about their actions, attitudes, and understandings of activism. In that sense, activists moving within different spaces would be expected to interact with different groups, routines and even interpretations of social problems. In that sense, the activist habitus is also explained along two dichotomies that the analysis unveils: the contentious vs. conform and the liquid vs. solid.

The contentious- conform continuum corresponds to the poles of contention and reproduction in the SAF; in that sense, much of what makes an activist habitus closer to contention or conformity is precisely the attitude towards the elected officials, the postures towards the state's SAFs, the way in which they understand and experience activism, either as a way to reproduce and gradually improve existing mechanisms and instances of participation or as a way to challenge instances of power, creating grassroots connections and pressure to foster societal change. Additionally, this dichotomy also reflects differences in repertoires of action and even understandings of politics. On the other hand, the liquid-solid continuum describes the way in which activists have been linked to the SAF, whether through a specific organisation or through different organisations and networks. Likewise, it also indicates their preferences in terms of organisational forms (highly professionalised and structured or small and spontaneous) and whether they claim to prefer effectiveness or the individual expression and individual contribution. The table below summarises some of the main traits of these two dichotomies:

Contentious (Cn) Political Action: challenge authority Open spaces for new voices Alternative and non-conventional repertoires System Transforming Views Less optimistic societal and political views	Conform (C) Often cooperate or support professional politics and institutional programmes Mostly conventional and institutionalised repertoires of action System Optimising Views
Liquid (L) Flexible Links and networks	Solid (S) Activism through a single organisation

Often alternate issues/groups	Concentrated network
Identity as independent activist	Ascending Trajectories within the organisation
Prefer horizontal basis-democratic organisational structures	Comfortable with hierarchic structures with clear divisions of labour
Favour personal expression and individual contribution in political action	Stress the importance of “experts” and “coordinators”
	Stress importance of effectiveness

Figure 23 Summary Types of Habitus

7.6.1 The contentious-conform

This part of the activist habitus is linked to the position within the poles of contention and reproduction in this SAF of young activism. Those closest to a contentious habitus (Thomas, Dilek, Anna, to a lesser extent, Sarah, Seyran and Christian) moved closer to the pole of contention in the SAF of young activism. Likewise, those closest to the conform habitus, moved closer to the pole of reproduction (Lisa, Marius and, to a lesser extent, Ludwig, and Juan) in the SAF of young activism.

The positioning within this spectrum was conceptualised based on descriptions of attitudes and tactics; what activists’ statements reveal about how they view activism, about their postures towards decision-makers and state SAFs, but also about their repertoires of action and strategies. Contentiousness is defined by a posture of either independence or challenge towards decision-makers, and the state’s SAFs. Contentious activists expressed an idea of activism that sought to challenge authority and open spaces for new voices (Tarrow 2008) keep checks of power (Spannring et al 2008) and expand understandings of political participation and repertoires of action (Pickard 2019, Spannring et al 2008, Dalton 2017). Conversely, conform activists conveyed a less challenging and more cooperative attitude with political actors (some of them, like Lisa and Marius even moved between both fields) but also a view of young activism that is to serve as an instance of cohort representation but also as spaces for understanding and learning the mechanics of participative democracy (Kiess 2021, Gaiser 2010). In addition, contentious-conform habitus also differed in their general view of the current state of affairs; conform activists tended to be more optimistic whereas contentious activists voiced stronger criticisms towards aspects of politics, economics and culture. The table below presents a few representative statements in order to illustrate some of the postures and contrasts between activists along this spectrum

Contentious	Conform
<p>Christian: I think my time in South America, but even before, it stressed the question: how did we get to this global shift? I mean poor, rich and why that still remains? And how these structures became so fixed that they can only change slowly... I see these things very critically, this capitalist model... things the way they are today... not necessarily towards democratic structures, but more (the question) to what extent are these structures democratic and why are some countries treated so differently than others⁸⁹</p>	<p>Marius: (...) access to education changes depending on the family mmm that could be a form of inequality... access to the labour market or the housing market... but I don't think it's more unequal than elsewhere.... The discussion is a bit annoying for me because I think that there's a lot being done to give people the same chances, I think we have it good in Germany⁹⁰</p> <p>(about the housing crisis and the demands to expropriate or control rents) ... shouldn't we rather invest the money in maybe reducing the building regulations? Or reducing taxes, for instance? And stimulate something...⁹¹</p>
<p>Thomas: I mean the party structures, I am very sceptical towards party structures as a source of political change, because I also assume there is a strong need for compromise in order to come into power (get elected) in the first place and are not really able to change anything or very slightly</p>	<p>Lisa: (...) I'm always disappointed when young people say oh, I don't want to (engage in partisan politics) it takes too long... yes, it takes time but at least something happens... that's how politics are done and then you are also really happy when you have examples like what happened with the public transport here⁹²</p>
<p>Thomas: Fukushima had to blow up in the air so that the CDU finally decided we need to abandon atomic energy... and, in the end, they still don't do it</p>	<p>Marius: (...) by now we use approximately 40% renewable energy and no one talks about that... they'd rather argue about (not) building pipelines⁹³</p>

⁸⁹ Ähm: (.) ja (.) auch (.) also: (.) mit Sicherheit hat das äh der Aufenthalt in Peru auch ähm: (.) also ich glaube schon vorher aber auch nochmal verstärkt äh: zu der Frage geführt ähm (.) wie es denn zu dieser Verschiebung in der Welt gekommen ist /I: m-hm/ also: reich arm und warum das immer noch heute so ist und wie Strukturen: so festgefahren sein können dass sich nur so langsam etwas ändert (.) ähm: (.) ja und dass ich da irgendwie auch ähm (.) dem sehr kritisch gegen:überstehe dem: (.) kapitalistischen Modell irgendwie den (.) Strukturen wie sie heute sind (.) ähm (.) ja (.) also nicht unbedingt äh demokratische Verhältnisse: aber: (.) ja (.) wie weit diese Verhältnisse dann demokratisch sind auch vielleicht /I: ja/ schaut man dann (.) u:nd ähm (.) ja (.) warum die einen Länder anders behandelt werden als die (.) anderen und so [00:40:25]

⁹⁰ Marius: (...) Zugang zu Bildung (.) unterschiedlich von äh: /I: m-hm/ von von von (.) den Eltern- Elternhaus zum Beispiel kann eine Ungleichheit darstellen (.) /I: ja/ ähm: oder sowas (.) [Lärm] Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt Zugang zum Wohnungsmarkt ich glaube (.) es ist hier nich ungleicher als woanders? /I: m-hm/ (.) äh: ich finde diese: allgemein auch diese Debatte über Ungleichheit auch'n bisschen lästig weil aus meiner Sicht (.) viel dafür getan wird (.) [Lärm] ähm: (.) jedem die gleichen Möglichkeiten zu geben und ich glaube da sind wir in Deutschland ziemlich gut unterwegs (.) wenn du's im Durchschnitt dich dir anguckst (.) wenn du natürlich dann (?in andere?)

⁹¹ Marius sollten wir nicht lieber Geld investieren indem wir zum Beispiel Bauvorschriften reduzieren? Steuern zum Beispiel reduzieren was fördern eben ne?

⁹² Anna: finde ich es auch schade wenn junge Leute sagen oh da habe ich keine Lust öh /I: ja/ es dauert mir jetzt zu lange ja das dauert lang aber dann passiert halt wenigstens was /I: ja ok/ wird halt dann Politik gemacht und wir sehen es halt bei manchen Dingen dann auch wieder mh ist man auch immer sehr froh wenn man so Beispiele hat zum Beispiel den Nachtverkehr in (Stadt)

⁹³ Marius: wir haben mittlerweile 40 % erneuerbare Energie am Stromnetz redet fast keiner drüber (.) äh: man äh sch- streitet dann eher darüber dass man halt (?keine?) Trassen bauen will

<p>Thomas: Political engagement for me, is also going with a spray can and bringing political statements to specific places, where it is important for me to get people thinking. Maybe in a very rich mansion to maybe ask to what extent is it cool to have something like this in the city. I find in this way protest is individualised and I can do it easily whenever it suits me... with a spray can, just like that"⁹⁴</p>	<p>Lisa: I don't really like this type of... action-style protests... I don't know (...) I mean at some point there have to be decisions..."⁹⁵</p>
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Figure 24 Ideal Typical Habitus: Contentious - Conform

The table presents a few contrasting statements to exemplify some of the attitudes of contentious or conform leaning activists. The first two statements address, from different perspectives, problems related to inequality. While Christian's statements present a deeply critical view of inequality and even of the economic system, Marius' comments (which are focused on Germany) reveal that he recognised inequality as a problem, but he stressed how there are good things being done to tackle this and it isn't a greater problem than elsewhere. Additionally, his second statement refers to the housing problem and advocates for a market solution. The statements contrast, on the one hand, an underlying inconformity with the current system (Christian) and, on the other hand, a posture that recognised problems but also confided in the existing (market and government) mechanisms to effectively tackle them. This contrast exemplifies the more optimistic views among conform activists compared to the contentious ones.

The second and fourth comments contrast Lisa and Thomas' views on different mechanisms of action: conventional (partisan) and non-conventional (individual or protest). Regarding partisanship as a mechanism for social change both activists acknowledged that passing resolutions through a partisan structure takes a long time, but Lisa claimed that's the way politics work whereas Thomas questioned the dynamic of electoral politics arguing that getting elected and building coalitions comes at a high cost, which ultimately works against real change. These two statements reflect much what Thomas and Lisa stressed throughout their interviews; he had a vision of activism closer to "keeping checks" (Spanring et al 2008) and she saw her activism closer to the SAF of politics and, thus, closer to mediating between youngsters and politics, cooperating in teaching and maintaining the mechanisms of representative democracy. Moreover, Lisa's statement mirrors many of her arguments throughout the interview since she often stressed that following procedures is important for democracy and transparency. Similarly, the fourth statements also refer to actions; Thomas stated he believed in individual, flexible and alternative political action while Lisa questioned what she called "action-style politics" (referring specifically to protests) because they didn't come with a solution. These statements

⁹⁵ Lisa: es halt also weil ich halt eben genau dieses dieses aktionsmäßige so Politikmachen halt irgendwie nicht also das gefällt mir nicht so gut /I:

(about partisanship as a mechanism for social change and about other alternative repertoires of action) unveil a different understanding of activism itself: while they are both interested in expressing ideas and activating social change, Thomas preferred actions directed at generating general discussion (or even shock) and creating counter-power and pressure for change. Lisa, on the other hand, described actions that aimed at the conventional spaces of participation in order to bring deliberation (among activists and ultimately among political actors) and eventually change.

Lastly, the third statements are both referring to environmentalism, but, more than that, these reflect the views of government action; Thomas claimed the CDU took too long to address the issue of nuclear energy while Marius stressed that there had been positive developments in environmental issues, and this should be acknowledged. Before specifically talking about Fukushima, Thomas claimed that activism needs to be able to surprise and create scandal (he referred specifically to some of *Greenpeace*'s actions) in order to have a chance. Marius, on the other hand, stressed the positive steps in environmental protection and lamented that the debate ignored these and decided to fight over details instead. Even more, during the interview, he very often criticised what he called "the culture of outrage" that he saw in many activist groups. These two statements reveal significant differences in their attitude towards decision-makers and towards the situation in general.

In addition to some of these attitudinal differences, activists also displayed tactical differences; conform activists preferred drafting resolutions and proposals, engaging in political education, while some of the contentious activists were more inclined to expand and explore repertoires of action, to include protest, petitioning, but also expressive mechanisms like blogging, graffitiing, DOI actions, grass-roots exchange, artistic workshops, etc. Besides regularly attending demonstrations, Thomas continued to have a few projects of his own, that included his blog, organising film nights with discussion rounds:

Thomas: what I'm still doing with *Einfach Leben* are some of my independent projects like for instance a film projection about police brutality... that's already planned for example... and then we invite people from our circle... we already have a long mailing list of people we can write... we engage in critique... critique towards the police⁹⁶

The statement above resonates with the interviewees' critical views of decision makers and state actors and it also reflects the understanding of activism as "keeping checks on power" (Spannring et al 2008). Thomas used a wide array of actions (the bike-lending project, the protests, discussions, knowledge exchange, etc), and often times he claimed to have used alternative and even aesthetic means to share

⁹⁶ Thomas: was ich jetzt bei *Einfach Leben* weiterhin mache is eben so kleinere Projekte (.) /I: m-hm/ mal ne politische Filmvorführung gegen Polizeigewalt (.) /I: oh/ is jetzt grade geplant (.) /I: ja/ zum Beispiel (.) die das werd ich jetzt machen irgendwie (.) und dann laden wir einfach in unserem Umfeld ein /I: m-hm/ es gibt schon wir haben schon auch ne große Mailingliste von Leuten die man an- anschreiben kann (.) (es ist) ... sagen wir Kritik (.) /I: ja/ Kritik auch an Polizei zum Beispiel (.) [00:24:42]

his views; through blogging, graffitiing and also (as described above) organising film projections in order to trigger discussions.

Dilek, Anna and Sarah also engaged in similar cultural activities albeit with a different focus; Dilek was a member of a reading group for peoples of colour, Anna organised a few artistic workshops for refugee women and Sarah organised DOI events, clothing exchange parties and campaigns in order to promote a more conscious and critical approach to consumerism

Sarah: We also started organising events which aren't events like in Christmas 'time instead of things' (campaign) or new years without fireworks no actual events with a location but Facebook locations. For Black Friday we organised this Green Friday to challenge this consumption craze and that hit really hard because in the end *Zero Waste* (city) was no longer visible as organiser because it had been liked and shared thousands of times. So, there is an interest there even if we sometimes have the feeling that we are talking in a bubble in very specific districts⁹⁷

The Green Friday campaign, that Sarah described above, was one of numerous actions and activities destined to present an alternative to consumerism and wastefulness. Interestingly, this particular action was purely an online campaign, and still, she counts it as a success. In addition, Sarah also talked about clothing exchange parties, repair-cafés, and do-it yourself workshops that ultimately sought to promote alternative ways of consumption but also build grass-roots networks of exchange among like-minded people. Anna, Christian and Sarah were not as explicitly critical of the conventional instances of participation or of decision-makers, but they were critical of consumerism in general and of what in Sarah's view were conventional ways of engaging and doing politics. As she stressed, part of her vision was "you don't have to feel bad for doing something good" and "you don't need to have a stick up your ass to talk about politics".

Sarah described herself as a conscious consumer, as did Anna and Christian; for all of them, conscious (and rather critical) consumption was a way of living in coherence with their values. Thomas was not a conscious consumer, but he described himself as "a critical consumer" furthermore, one of his initiatives is precisely linked to promoting sustainable and democratic uses of urban space. Conscious consumerism and further do-it-yourself actions are closer to the side of contentiousness because of the attempt to explore and re-define the limits and the procedures in doing political activism (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017). Within the discussions about the climate crisis, many of them linked this to inequality

⁹⁷ wir jetzt auch äh angefangen äh Veranstaltungen mal mit rein zu nehmen die jetzt keine Veranstaltung in dem Sinne sind sondern so was wie zu Weihnachten Zeit statt Zeug oder zu Silvester Silvester ohne Böller so was halt keine Veranstaltung die örtlich ist /I: ja/ die wir veranstalten sondern ne Facebookveranstaltung für Dinge zum Beispiel auch beim Black Friday hatten wir da eine Green Friday- /I: mhm/ ähm Veranstaltung um die Leute einfach nur drauf hinzuweisen gegen diesen ganzen Konsumwahnsinn zu gehen und ähm das hat krass eingeschlagen und da ?? dann nämlich auf einmal nicht mehr nur also *Zero Waste* Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt) ist ne scheiß Initiative der Absender ist quasi /I: ja/ in den Hintergrund gerückt und das ist so viele tausend Male ähm geliked äh geteilt worden Zusagen was weiß ich halt ?? da da sind die Leute schon interessierter dran /I: jaja/ weil wir manchmal das Gefühl haben wir sind halt sehr ne Blase und es betrifft auch bestimmte Stadtviertel

and current life- and working structures. As we talked about environmentalism, Anna mentioned that living sustainably was important to her, but she understood this option wasn't available to everyone:

I am in favour of changing our labour structures, I mean this 40-hour week and then with commute and strict schedules. Luckily, I don't have this (I don't work under this conditions) but that is the thing: if I want to rescind from palm oil and I want to shop unpackaged (groceries) I need time.⁹⁸

Anna, who initially mobilised in environmentalism, told me this stopped being an important issue for her and the challenges she faced in trying to live more sustainably raised her criticisms towards the current working and production structures. Moreover, through her job and her own personal experiences, Anna was also very critical of structural sexism which is why (among other actions) she used gender-sensitive language, organised artistic workshops for refugee women, attended feminist and LGBTQ demonstrations.

These activists displayed different degrees and even different forms of contentiousness, which was expressed either in their attitudes or actions and mechanisms of participation. Contentiousness was sometimes expressed in their views of activism as counter-power, or in their framing of societal problems. In that sense, Christian, Thomas, Dilek and Seyran were profoundly contentious because they framed their views in system-critical statements, making a particular emphasis on inequality and a significant democratic deficit and the need to open spaces for more voices to participate. Perhaps to a lesser extent, Sarah and Anna also had contentious attitudes given their consumer-criticism. Additionally, contentiousness was also expressed through different actions like protests, consumer-critical campaigns, artistic workshops, conscious consumerism, etc.

On the other side of the spectrum, the activists closer to a conform habitus expressed a view of activism that is more cooperative with political and state actors, as well as a preference for more established means and instances of participation, for adopting representative and mediating roles and even engaged in teaching about representative instances and democratic institutions. As we were talking about JEF, Juan also recognised something that was discussed by some of the more contentious activists; that young people felt like politicians (in particular, those in Brussels) were too far from them and their everyday lives. Hence, one of JEF's biggest actions was to organise model EU discussions with the schools

⁹⁸ Anna: das ist ne Katastrophe /I: ja/ (.) und das finde ich wiederum das Miese (.) ich bin ja eh für ähm Wandel von Arbeitsstrukturen auch also diese 40-Stunden-Wochen mit Pendeln noch am besten und mit vorgeschriebenen Arbeitszeiten und Mittagspausen (.) was ich zum Glück schon so nicht mehr hab (.) aber das ist halt die Sache wenn ich dann auch noch auf Palmöl verzichten will und wenn ich verpackungsfrei einkaufen will dann brauch ich eigentlich Zeit (.) [00:45:36]

Juan: One of our biggest actions is for example the simulation of the European Parliament... so about 80 pupils are taken to the city hall so that they can experience how a European MP drafts a law proposal⁹⁹

Juan's statement reveals that they cooperate with schools, local authorities and that they attempt at teaching pupils about representative democracy as a way of bringing politics closer to their lives and strengthening their trust. Additionally, even though JEF defines itself as a supra-partisan organisation, they organised campaigns educating young people about the European elections and the importance of voting. Similarly, Ludwig also talked about information events to discuss topics that could be relevant for his fellow students, like the European election, the university's structures, university laws:

Ludwig: we are raising awareness about the European election, I mean about the parties and their positions towards different topics, furthermore, the university regulations should be modified soon (...) we want to create awareness so that they think about this, like what's this university regulation anyway? What's going on with that? And what changes for us? And what about the tuition fees?¹⁰⁰

Much like Juan, Ludwig described activities that placed him and the student union not only as mediators between youngsters and decision-makers, but also as instances of co-determination that help sustain representative democracy (Gaiser 2010). Ludwig and Juan were not as explicitly critical of protests as Marius was, but they saw their roles mostly in mediation and in promoting conventional participation than acting as counter-powers. In regard to the FFF protests, Juan claimed it was a good thing but he'd rather engage for environmentalism differently:

Juan: well, I do have a lot of respect for the people who are going to FFF protests because I think without FFF, this (the environmental crisis) wouldn't be so visible but, on the other hand, I think for me personally, I want to I am trying to join a political party and then maybe do environmental politics and other topics this way... but FFF I haven't been there maybe I'll go on the 24th¹⁰¹

Juan added to this that he knew a few of his colleagues from JEF were members of the FFF network. Interestingly, Marius had a relatively similar view of these protests, since he admitted they had been important in setting the agenda and making society talk (intensively) about the environmental crisis, but

⁹⁹ Juan: einer unserer großen Aktionen ist halt zum Beispiel (?der Simulation?) des Europäischen Parlaments (.) /I: aha/ circa 80 Schüler werden ähm einen Tag an verschiedenen Schulen ähm: zum: Rathaus der jeweiligen Stadt (.) gebeten um dort ähm einen Tag mal zu erleben wie ein europäischer Abgeordneter (.) ähm: ein Gesetz entwirft

¹⁰⁰ Ludwig: wir machen jetzt vermehrt äh: auf die Europawahl aufmerksam /I: m-hm/ bzw. auf die: ähm: Parteien und deren Stellungen zu: verschiedenen Themen zumal jetzt auch das Hochschulgesetz novelliert werden soll (.)(...) da möchten wir wieder sensibilisieren dass: die Leute n bisschen gucken okay worum geht's überhaupt beim Hochschulgesetz? und äh: was (.) was passiert da eigentlich? ändert sich was für uns? /I: genau/ gerade Thema Studiengebühren ne?

¹⁰¹ Juan also ich hab Respekt vor Leuten die jetzt zu Fridays for Future gehen? /I: ja/ ähm: (.) ich seh den Weg ähm: aus zwei (.) Sichten (.) /I: ja/ ich glaub ähm: (.) ohne Fridays for Future wär's nich sichtbar gewesen? /I: ja/ zum anderen denk ich aber für mich persönlich ich engagier mich halt in in Part- also versuch jetzt grad m:ich für'ne Partei mich zu: interessieren also nich nur für die JEF /I: ja/ sondern ähm da auch aktiv zu werden und ähm aktiv äh: (.) ähm: Umweltpolitik oder andere äh Themen (?und Standpunkte?) da einzubringen also (.) Fridays for Future war ich noch nich und vielleicht geh ich am 24. Mai dahin da muss ich jetzt noch schau'n genau (.) /I: ok/ [00:15:13]

this was something that elected officers will have to deal with and it would be best to direct the energy from the protests towards solutions.

Besides stressing the importance of working within what he called “the normal mechanisms of action”, throughout the interviews Marius framed his positions and those of the JU as “pragmatic” and conform to the established mechanisms of action. As we talked more extensively about the environmental crisis, he stressed the importance of leaving this in the hands of the “pragmatic” actors:

I have the feeling that certain positions like left wing and green positions have an overhand here () we have this electorate so the green (party) and the SPD they are very strong whereas the CDU not so much and this is a pity because in my view, and in the view of the CDU, these parties have more short-term solutions but rather just bans and short-term things and they act in our view very radically and not very realistically¹⁰²

Marius, as well as Lisa, often framed their differences with other sectors as “radicals vs. realists” or “leftists vs. pragmatists” and placed themselves along the “realists” or “pragmatists”. Marius was critical of what he considered to be more radical views on environmentalism, that included car-free inner cities as well as strong bans and regulations. Likewise, he stressed the importance of finding solutions through the established mechanisms and lamented that activists “wasted so much energy in outrage (protests)” instead of finding solutions. In that sense, he resembled many of Lisa’s views of the mechanisms of participation (even if he often claimed that the JUSSO belonged to the radical leaning groups).

In contrast to some of the contentious activists who saw their role as challenging power holders, Lisa’s trajectory was shaped by cooperation with decision-makers

Well this is different... in Manheim we also had a red major or an SPD major here in (city) there was one but not anymore ok and so naturally, that was nice in Manheim that we were the governing party so to say there we had... well we often had meetings with the major where we talked to him and he also thought it was important that we had this exchange but we also have this here... with the council members that’s similar (...).¹⁰³One of the interesting aspects of this statement is not only the communication and exchange they had with the major in her

¹⁰² Marius (...)das was mein Gefühl is (.) dass bestimmte (.) Positionen überhand nehmen also politische Positionen (.) /I: m-hm/ (?da mein ich jetzt ähm:?) also dass du (.) für mich (.) sind eben genau diese Sachen wie ähm: (.) linkere Positionen die grüneren Positionen eher so Wählerschaften der der Grünen sind sehr stark ja auch hier in Stadt wir haben ja /I: ja/ (.) Parteien wie SPD oder Grüne die gewinnen und CDU is eher hier nicht so äh: in der Überhand (.) find ich sehr schade weil gerade diese Parteien aus meiner Sicht aus und aus CDU-Sicht natürlich nicht die nicht die (.) die langfristigen Lösungen haben sondern eher wie wir halt schon sagten (.) ähm: (.) eher die Verpu- die Verbote (?für Verbote stehen?) /I: m-hm/ eher äh kurzfristige Sachen machen und ähm: für uns zu radikal rangehen und nich ganzheitlich genug sich das oder realistisch genug

¹⁰³ das ist natürlich hier anders ähm aber von der Stadt her also Mannheim war auch ein roter Oberbürgermeister oder ein SPD-Oberbürgermeister hier in Stadt(Stadt)(Stadt) gab es auch mal gibt es jetzt auch nicht mehr ok aber das war natürlich in Mannheim nett dass wir da ne Regierungspartei sozusagen da hatten /I: ja/ also wir hatten auch immer Treffen mit dem Oberbürgermeister wo wir dann mit dem geredet haben der fand das auch sehr wichtig dass man da einen Austausch hatte /I: ja/ aber das haben wir hier eigentlich auch mit den ähm Ratsmitgliedern die wir halt hier in der Stadt haben das ist eigentlich ähnlich ähm (.) die Ausrichtung der Jusos die politische Ausrichtung der Jusos ist sehr unterschiedlich in Mannheim und in (Stadt) /I: mhm/ ähm es gibt ja also bei den Jusos auch Strömungen und /I: mhm/ ähm das sind so ein bisschen (Stadt) ist sehr mittig eigentlich /I: ja/ also das ist nicht unbedingt in irgendeine Richtung sehr gezogen Mannheim ist sehr pragmatisch /I:

previous city, but also that her statement suggests that in her view, the borders between activism and politics are rather blurred and she saw herself as part of the governing party.

7.7 Positioning of activists in the contentious- conform continuum



Figure 25 Continuum Contentious - Conform

The diagram above presents the activists within the contentious- conform continuum. They are positioned in an order that also reflects how they stand with respect to one another. Following this, Thomas is the one closest to the contentious side of the spectrum, while Dilek and Anna follow in line. Dilek also expressed profound system-criticism and stressed that (in her view) politicians are too far from normal citizens. Still, slightly different from Thomas, she spent time within a partisan group and in a student parliament. Seyran is somewhat further from the extreme; he also expressed profound social criticisms, but his actions mostly fell within a (relatively) conventional framework, considering the long history of IGMJ and labour in Germany (Busse et al 2015). Sarah's testimony revealed slightly contentious attitudes and tactics; part of her activism is linked to her criticism of consumerism and wastefulness and to addressing people directly in order to promote grass-roots connections and cultural shift. In addition, Sarah strongly prioritised innovative and expressive repertoires of action and interest in expanding the ways of engagement and connecting them with expression and leisure. Juan and Ludwig, on the other hand, came closer to the conform habitus; both reported about activist trajectories that developed within institutionalised instances, and both wanted to join a youth political organisation. Lastly, Marius and Lisa, were the ones closest to the conform habitus; their testimonies suggest that they see themselves as connected to the SAF of politics (which is not the case for the others), that they have more optimistic views and even greater trust in the established mechanisms of participation.

7.8 The liquid-solid continuum

This continuum describes the ways in which activist described their presence in the field but also the type of trajectory they followed; whether they acted through a single organisation or through multiple affiliations, and whether their trajectories revealed consistent and sustained growth within a given organisation or a tendency to drift and expand. Furthermore, this dichotomy also presents the

organisational structures they felt more comfortable with, the size and level of structuration and decision-making.

Those closest to the solid habitus reflected ways of being an activist that came closer to those of “the professional world of political participation” (Busse et al 2015) in that they expressed positive views of highly structured and hierarchical organisations, they had clear memberships usually to a single organisation and privileged effectiveness over personal expression. Moreover, their trajectories and self-definition as activists were strongly linked to a specific organisation. Conversely, activists with a more liquid habitus expressed their activist trajectories and self-definition through different groups (or networks) and issues, they privileged self-expression and often identified as independent activists. Hence, the solid activists were closer to the professionalised and conventional forms of engagement (Busse et al 2015, Spanning et al 2008-) whereas liquid activists came closer to some of the practices and attitudes described as new forms of political participation (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017).

The table below presents a few exemplary statements in order to illustrate some of the traits of the solid-liquid habitus.

Solid	Liquid
<p>Lisa: Well, that was introduced lately the results from a social media seminar that I unfortunately couldn't attend but there were so experts who once again said something about this subject die explained us again that we actually need to change to Instagram... that we sooner or later can't get around this so we have a few people in the board of directors who are very active on Instagram, learning this and who are actively doing this¹⁰⁴.</p>	<p>Sarah: Oh yeah and we made these little signs for the clothing exchange and so we wrote some facts (about clothing pollution) but really nicely made so like cut down like T-shirts... made of cardboard and then painted on and yeah right now I would say rather unprofessional but that's why I find it nice, because it's handmade¹⁰⁵</p>
<p>Marius: I am also a member of the JEF but I am not as active as in the Ju... I go every now and then, I use it as a platform to get information</p>	<p>Dilek: I don't have the feeling that I am missing anything in activism, if I want to, I don't need a big group with me but I can, I mean you can also get something done by yourself.¹⁰⁷</p>

¹⁰⁴ Ja das ist so das also das wurde vorgestellt letztens die Ergebnisse von so nem also wir hatten son Social Media Seminar wo ich leider nicht konnte aber ähm da wurden auch nochmal von so Experten hatten wir da die haben nochmal was zu dem Thema gesagt die haben nochmal uns erklärt dass wir eigentlich auf Instagram umsteigen müssten /I: ja/ also über kurz überlang kommen wir nicht drumherum und wir haben jetzt auch ein paar Leute bei uns im Vorstand die ganz aktiv Instagram sich das beibringen und das auch völlig aktiv machen und so was (37.46)

¹⁰⁵ on /I: ja/ allen und dann hat einer z. B. mal kleine Schilder gebastelt für den Kleidertausch z. B. auch wo dann so Fakten draufstehen aber total schön gemacht so T-Shirts ausgeschnitten /I: ja/ aus Pappe und da drauf gemalt und ja im Moment noch ein bisschen ich würd sagen unprofessionell aber deswegen find ich es schön /I: ja/ weil es ist handgemacht (35.40)

¹⁰⁷ Dilek: ich hab nicht so das Gefühl dass mir irgendwas so an Aktivismus fehlt weil ich weiß wenn ich möchte ich brauch keine große Gruppierung hinter mir /I: mhm/ sondern ich kann halt auch /I: Du kannst schon von alleine/ im Alleingang genau /I: irgendwas rausbringen

<p>about a topic I care about... it's a bit filtered because I don't share their views of Europe¹⁰⁶</p>	
<p>I think that's a matter of effectiveness I don't think it would be as effective if everything was decided democratically at every single level... that's what I think, that's why I like it the way it is conceived and no one is limited if someone wants to work on a completely different issue, they can do it maybe outside <i>Greenpeace</i>.¹⁰⁸</p>	<p>Thomas: (...) I actually liked these big scandalous actions from <i>Greenpeace</i> it's the whole association structure that I don't like... I don't want to sit in meetings every two weeks with a bunch of old white men giving long speeches¹⁰⁹</p>

Figure 26 Ideal- Typical Habitus: Solid- Liquid

The statements above present contrasting views in order to express some of the traits of this continuum. The first row contrasts Sarah's and Lisa's statements regarding action and expertise; Lisa lamented that she missed a seminar with a social media expert that taught the group how to effectively use Instagram whereas Sarah joyfully described the hands-on improvisation in one of their events. Lisa often referred to the advantages of being able to rely on experts and well-functioning structures, whereas Sarah enjoyed having more space for individual expression.

The second row presents Marius' and Dilek's statements about organisational membership; Marius talked how he joined JEF, but this was totally secondary to his JU engagement, whereas Dilek described herself as an independent activist at the time. This is something that, ultimately, contrasts with their differentiated trajectories; his was lineal and solid and hers more abeyant and experimental. Hence, his activist presence and identity is strongly linked to the JU (as Lisa's is to the JUSOS and the Seyran's to IGMJ) whereas Dilek is more strongly identified with her causes and with disperse networks.

The third row shows contrasting views of *Greenpeace* as a highly structured organisation: Christian sees this as a relief and argues that, ultimately, the way it's set up, the organisation can be more effective than if things were really decided at the basis. Conversely, Thomas disliked this complex structured, and

¹⁰⁶ ja also in der Jetzt bin ich aktiv /I: mhm/ ähm Junge Europäischen Föderalisten ähm allerdings jetzt nicht so stark wie in der JU also ich geh ab und zu zu Veranstaltungen /I: Ja/ bin eher das passive Mitglied ich nutze das als ähm als Plattform um Informationen rauszuholen ähm die erstmal in nem Bereich sind der mich interessiert und sozusagen ein bisschen vorgefiltert sind ne weil wir vertreten nun mal jetzt die Position nicht auch für Europa

¹⁰⁸ Ja und ich: denke halt in so'm großen Rahmen ist es dann auch ne Frage der Effektivität also: ähm (.) wenn man /I: ja/ ich ich glaube nicht daran dass es so effektiv wäre wenn man alles äh: basisdemokratisch auf allen Ebenen abstimmen würde (.) /I: ja/ das denke ich (.) ähm: ja (.) deswegen ähm finde ich das so wie's äh: aufgebaut ist sehr gut ähm: (.) und wenn man: quasi also ich mein es wird ja auch niemand eingeschränkt wenn man zu irgend'nem anderen Thema arbeiten möchte kann man das ja immer: (.) tun dann vielleicht außerhalb der Organisation (.) /I: ok/ so (.) /I: ja/ also ich meine wenn man (.) [00:27:37]

¹⁰⁹ Thomas (...) das fand ich attraktiv bei *Greenpeace* aber die ganze Vereinsstruktur die da (.) die hatte natürlich auch Gott ich will hier nich alle zwei Wochen in irgendso'ner Sitzung sitzen in der irgendwie (.) irgendwelche alten weißen Männer lange Dialoge halten (.) kein Bock (.)

this experience is precisely what led him to realise that he wanted to organise something himself with his own group of friends. The graph below shows the positions taken by activists within the liquid-solid continuum.

7.9 Activists in the liquid-solid continuum



Figure 27 Continuum Liquid- Solid

The second graph shows the positioning of the activists between the liquid and solid activism. So far, the trajectories reveal that all interviewees have been interacting with a community of practice and see themselves as a part thereof, they have had different ways of living their activism. The liquid- solid continuum explains how the activists described their own presence in the SAF of young activism; whether they connected through a single organisation, through different organisations or through disperse networks moreover, this continuum presents the type of organisations they prefer to work with. Talking to most of the activists, it was clear that they had a good understanding of how their organisations (or groups) functioned and how they felt about this. When I asked Christian the structures at *Greenpeace*, he had a very positive outlook

Christian: Pretty cool. Really, I mean, sometimes I have heard the critique that it is relatively undemocratic specially when it comes to the process of how the paid staff are selected at the headquarters and then how they give the themes practically top-down and that they split the tasks I don't experience it like that but rather even a relief... of course because if some people can take time because they do this professionally they work there... to really think about things and decide... it's always a process and they are very open about it and so there are some main topics which are pre-given and that is decided every year but there are also a lot of seminars and once a year a big meeting where all groups can attend and where one can also vote and give input and the people in Hamburg are always available so you can also say when you don't agree with something and in any case the groups have some relatively big freedoms so there are some appointments and fixed dates so we get suggestions from the headquarters like action days and then all (the local groups) do the same and so it is more likely to come in the news but on the other hand we can also decide what we do at the local level and that I think is done democratically and then we sit here sometimes and discuss for a very long time how to do things or who we want to address or what we want to tackle here at the local level and how to carry out the action that's why I actually find it effective when we are assigned themes and actions and we can decide whether we do them or not but we don't have the responsibility to get informed about these issues by ourselves.

Christian's pragmatic statement contrast with Sarah's view of *Greenpeace* as "too stiff and everything is pre-given" but it does reflect some of Lisa and Marius' views as they also appealed to a perceived

effectiveness when they argued in favour of partisanship. Christian is willing to negotiate these spaces of expression in order to be in a more pragmatic and effective group and he stresses how those things which are important for an individual activist can be pursued in their free time. This contrasts with not only with Sarah's views, but also Dilek and Thomas' who in their trajectories display a greater interest in shaping the groups and networks and are sceptical of highly structured organisations. Christian does not express an intend to shape the organisation but to work within it and to satisfy any further needs for coherence and expression elsewhere.

Christian and Sarah present an interesting comparison because they both mentioned similar topics, namely, human rights and environmentalism as their core causes. But while Christian prioritises the effectiveness of working within a large and well-structured organisation like *Greenpeace*, Sarah actually wanted something smaller where she could have a greater role in shaping the organisation itself. They are both members of Food Sharing, but Sarah has been more disperse in her activism, because she combines this group, with her work with *Viva con Agua* and *Zero Waste*. Juan has more of a middle-point position given that his early engagement is strongly linked to the organisation (JEF) but his ongoing politicisation has led him to become engaged in the student union at his college and to consider joining a political party. Moreover, he combines his activism with social engagement.

The placement within the continuum is a simplified approximation to the much more nuanced and complex attitudes displayed by the activists. For once, even those activists who had a more solid habitus and whose activism was clearly rooted in one organisation, had become at least curious about other groups and possibilities and had explored this possibility; Marius and Lisa joined JEF even if they remained only as passive members, Ludwig had expanded his networks to LGBTQ circles and to partisan groups, Seyran considered joining a political party. Furthermore, the fact that they had followed a certain trajectory and had been rooted to specific spaces in the SAF and to a specific organisation, didn't imply they were uncritical of the organisation or it's structures. Christian and Marius recognise the possible criticism towards highly professionalised organisations. Likewise, those closer to a liquid activism also see the downsides and admit the importance of some degree of formalisation in order to maintain the group. Therefore, the liquid or solid activists reflect more how they have lived their activism, where they have developed their networks and practices, the kind of meso-level factors that make them feel comfortable.

7.9.1 Activist habitus and the experiences and backgrounds they linked to their activism

This table illustrates the positions of the activists in the two dichotomies that make up for the activist habitus as well as the main instances of socialisation and the life experiences and situations that they connected with their decision or their later motivation to remain active

Name	Pol. Socialisation	Inequality	Parents	Volunteering	C-Cn	S-L	Trajectory
Anna	Project.	++	-	++*	Cn	L	A
Christian	Family/ Travel	+	+	+	Cn	S	L
Dilek	Media	++	-		Cn	L	A
Lisa	Family	-	++	+	C	S	L
Marius	Family	-	++	+	C	S	L
Sarah	Travel	+	-	+	Cn	L	A
Seyran	Family/ Union	++	-		Cn	S	L
Thomas	University	++	-	+	Cn	L	A
Juan	Media/Project	++	-	++	C	S	L

Figure 28 Summary of Habitus, Experiences and Backgrounds

The table briefly summarises where the activists stand within the two dichotomies identified, and main biographic and ideological issue as described by each interviewee. Moreover, the table also shows how given the ways in which they combine these traits, each activist has developed their own political habitus which, in turn, reflects their experiences, priorities and standing within the field. The analysis of the activists' narratives within this proposed framework shows that the dichotomies represent ideal- typical polarities and that the association to one or the other is rather an inclination. Secondly, that activists are, in the shaping of their habitus, in permanent change and negotiation; they change as the field does, and they are constantly negotiating their experiences (and the re-interpretations thereof) the positions in the field, and the constraints/ possibilities provided by the organisations.

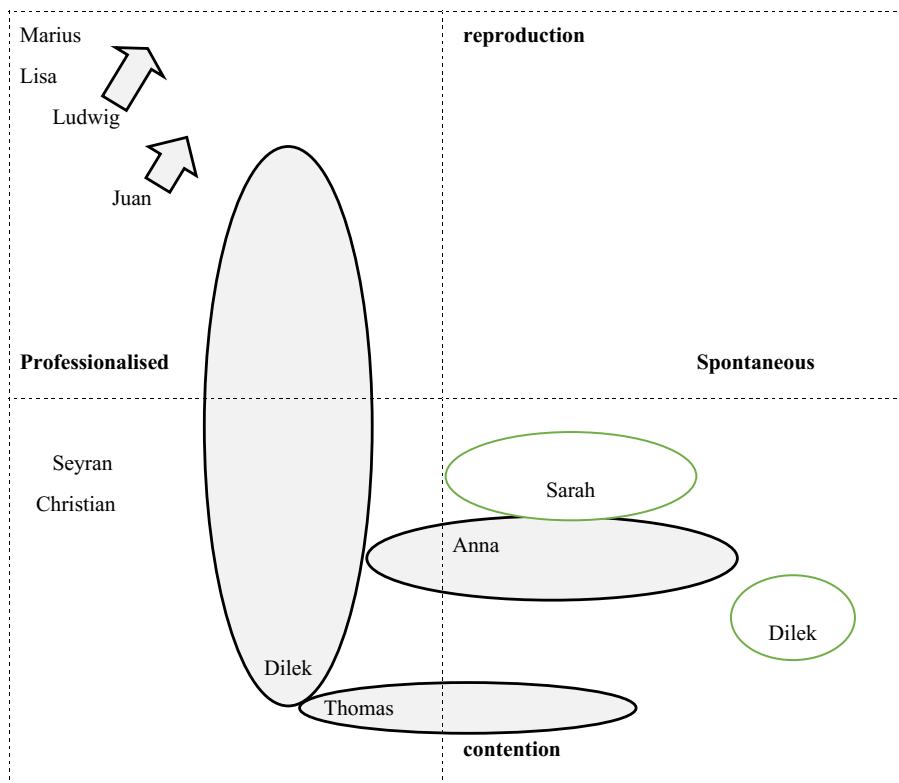
The table also shows that those who connected experiences of inequalities and a strong peer-to-peer element with their narratives of socialisation and activism were closer to having contentious attitudes; Thomas, Dilek, Anna, Seyran. While it is certainly difficult to establish this directly, their stories suggest that the experiences of inequality and protest participation (Dilek and Thomas) helped them develop a taste and an understanding of activism as necessary resistance (to power, to specific dynamics) and a wish to open more spaces for marginalised groups. Anna started within environmental issues through which she not only developed a critical stance towards consumerism but also a taste for challenging dominant narratives/ lifestyles. Her personal experiences of discrimination and her experiences working with girls, seem to have fuelled these contentious attitudes. Seyran enrolled through the union and was socialised therein, which could be linked to strengthening his identity as a working-class young man and his emphasis on system-critical stances like inequality.

Seyran and Juan are hybrid cases in that they have some contentious attitudes and admit being shaped by experiences of inequality, and both count inequality as one of their political priorities. Moreover, they both attribute much of their political socialisation to their organisations. They both have critical views of society, but Juan has shaped his expectations within the ideal of attaining change through the established mechanisms of action, in particular political parties. This could be connected to his overall positive experience within circles that have conform attitudes and professionalised structures. Furthermore, Juan didn't describe experiences of discrimination very significantly nor did he link these to loss of specific opportunities (like Anna and Seyran who linked theirs to losing a job, and Dilek who connected hers to having to commute to school every day) but rather to uncomfortable situations in which people assumed he was a refugee in 2015. Moreover, Sarah and Christian admit they never experienced inequalities nor discrimination. Still, they were both strongly impacted by their experiences abroad and this shaped their attitudes towards consumerism and environmentalism and shaped them as contentious-leaning activists. Lastly, Ludwig was politically socialised through established instances (class speaker, students' union) and his attitude is more oriented towards conformity and moderation. He and Marius shared a view of themselves as "non-academic" people from working-class (or rather lower middle-class) backgrounds, but this wasn't interpreted as a particular disadvantage nor did they feel like they were affected by stigmatisation, as Thomas felt. In addition, Ludwig didn't report about discrimination because of his sexual orientation, like Anna did. He did attend LGTBQ demonstrations and organised university groups to go together, but this was expressed more in terms of positive affirmation than grievance. He connects his experience as class speaker to developing a taste for leadership, organising and engagement, something which he also connected to his work with ASTA and his decision to join a party in the future: he hadn't developed through an issue but through this practice of leadership, representation and mediation.

Activists that reported about a difficult starting experience, like Dilek and who admit they couldn't establish a connection with a specific group (Thomas) opted for smaller, more alternative organisations and ended up having a strong vocation as independent activists, and a liquid profile. Sarah and Anna, who described their political socialisation as linked to specific issues developed as liquid activists and in Anna's case, also with an identity as an independent activist. Conversely, Ludwig and Juan described a positive experience within spaces of professionalised action and a strong role/ organisational identity which could account for their "solid" habitus: field presence mostly through an organisation, comfortable with hierarchical structures, comfortable with more vertical structures and dynamics. They both moved within the spaces of conformity and professionalism and expected to continue moving within these spaces. Marius, Lisa, Seyran and Christian narrated positive stories of engagement and growth within their organisations; even if they recognised the challenges and shortcomings, they established personal and "professional" (activist) bonds within the organisations, strong organisational identities (personal, ideologic and tactical) and their statements revealed a more solid activist habitus.

Those who were biographically closer to their causes or groups, like Lisa, Marius and Christian, all of whom had politically active parents, linked these role models to their trajectories and, in the case of Marius and Lisa, parties were the first option when they decided to enrol. Lisa and Marius looked at partisan politics as the first option, because they knew this from home, and have developed a common sense understanding that this is how politics are supposed to work. They are both sceptical towards those they classify as “radical” (which includes disparate groups like the Left, the AfD, and in Marius’ case, some of the Green and SPD campus groups). In that sense, they praise and value ‘moderation’ and pragmatism as important qualities. For Marius the very instances and channels of participation are as important as the initiatives themselves; he is less pessimistic about the state of society, and this becomes clear when he uses his own biography as an example that social mobility is possible and that young people from different backgrounds do have the opportunity to participate.

Figure 29 Positions taken in the SAF of activism



The figure above illustrates the spaces activists had occupied in the field of activism, based on their descriptions. The illustration shows that some activists have had relatively ‘fixed’ positions in the field, and this was mostly the case for “solid” activists, whether conform- or contentious leaning. On the other hand, some of the more liquid-contentious activists had moved around different groups and networks, hence their names appear in a circle. The circles attempt to give a rough idea of the spaces in which these activists move. Lastly, Ludwig and Juan were intending to move into political parties, hence the upwards-pointing arrows. Ludwig had also venture into some spaces of spontaneous activism, namely, LGBTQ networks but he was mostly defined through his ASTA membership and his expectation to join a political party. While most the activists have moved within the same areas of the field that they entered through, Dilek shows a different profile because she has moved closer to very spontaneous initiatives

(the Safe Spaces and group for Peoples of Colour) and also within more professionalised spaces (SDS) and instances closer to the spaces of reproduction (the Student Parliament).

7.9.1.1 The ideal typical combinations: Thomas and Lisa

Thomas can illustrate an ideal-typical activist profile; one who is closer to contentiousness and liquid activism. Thomas sees a high value in individual action, individual reflection and in challenging the existing structures. He is comfortable with confrontational and non-conventional repertoires of action and he is sceptical towards partisan activism, partly because he stresses the importance of having independent non-partisan citizens' networks as sources of political change, and partly because of an understanding of activism and politicisation that is closer to the idea of "keeping checks" on power (Spannring et al 2008) opening new spaces and voices for activism (Tarrow 2008 Spannring et al 2008). Additionally, his statements also revealed a clear preference for looser friendship-based networks of action and a strong identity as an independent spontaneous activist who is not very comfortable in highly structured groups. Thomas, as others like Anna, Sarah and Dilek, values personal expression and creation in activism.

Moreover, throughout the interview he stressed that he enjoyed being able to initiate new projects and didn't like the high degree of formalisation he saw in *Greenpeace*: while he recognised the need for some degree of formalisation in organisations, in order to mobilise resources and organise bigger actions, he nonetheless argued that the bureaucratisation of activism and political work is something that demotivates him because he doesn't see the political aspect in some of the logistic work: during the interview he gave the example of the maintenance of the bicycles they use in *Einfach Leben* and stressed "I don't see what is political about fixing a bike or changing a flat tire"

The idea of his engagement is about challenging power, about bringing people together (strengthening networks of civil society) promoting exchange and collective reflection. That is at the core of his engagement and of his own understanding of political activism and of "the sense of being there". Thomas' trajectory also contrasts with Lisa's; his trajectory could be more accurately described as "abeyant" given that he first joined activist activities when he participated in the university strikes, he then joined *Greenpeace* and quickly disengaged. He argues that most of his friends are left-leaning or "radical left" and most of them are politically active. He still supports different initiatives and demonstrations and has contacts with different groups. Even if he was one of the founding members of *Einfach Leben* and he was happy to see the initiative grew and developed further, his activism wasn't

not defined solely through the affiliation to this group but more through his critical stance, his embeddedness in networks of activism and his support of different initiatives and actions.

Lisa, on the other hand, came closer to the conform and solid habitus. This is visible in the practices but also in the fundamental understanding of her activism, which was more about sustaining and supporting democracy (Gaiser 2010). In contrast to Thomas, she reported about a lineal and consistent trajectory directly linked to the JUSOS; she took positions of responsibility and mostly networked within the organisation. Moreover, throughout the interview, she stressed the importance of acting within the existing mechanisms in order to maintain and support transparency and effectiveness. During her time in Mannheim the SPD was in office and thus, the JUSOS had some access to the majors' office. She also mentioned how at the time, the JUSOS and the major were in touch with the Viennese major, also a social democrat, and discussed possible solutions for the housing crisis.

Lisa was aware of the complexity of political parties are complex and she recognised it takes time and effort to get an initiative passed. Nonetheless, she repeatedly insisted on the importance of understanding procedures and their significance for democracy and added that, ultimately, parties were the most effective way of achieving social change. Lisa was not opposed to alternative repertoires of action, but she did question demonstrating and petitioning because she thought these were not methods that addressed the solutions.

The contrast between Lisa's and Thomas' testimonies about how they see activism in general and partisanship, presents a sharp contrast between the two ideal typical habitus; on the one hand, that of a contentious- liquid activist, on the other hand, the habitus of a conform-solid activist. As a contentious liquid activist, Thomas has moved further from the intersections with the SAF of politics and the dominant spaces of the SAF of young activism, while Lisa has been precisely in this intersection of young activism and the SAF of politics.

Lisa and Marius, who represent much of this conform activist profile, constantly positioned their attitudes as "pragmatic, reasonable" and contrasted with the "ideological and radical" groups. When Lisa speaks about demonstrations, strikes and occupations, she frames her criticism appealing to "effectiveness" and "pragmatism". Lisa sees the purpose in many of the existing bureaucratic and administrative structures; she understands that the way it is conceived, many of the structures of the current system make change and new initiatives slower and sometimes even more difficult to achieve. Still, she argues, these limitations "exist for a reason". As opposed to Thomas, Lisa has focused her attention in the JUSOS and has channelled her political concerns solely through this organisation: she admits that she joined JEF, but only as a passive member, and that she does do a lot of networking but mostly intra-organisational networking; connecting with JUSOS in other cities, between districts, connecting with social-democratic youth in other countries, etc.

These two ideal-typical activist profiles express profound differences not only in terms of what they consider to be the legitimate, acceptable, and proper repertoires of action but also in terms of what they consider the main purpose of political activism: Lisa is comfortable within a large organisational structure and with activism that creates representation and supports representative democracy, whereas Thomas saw activism as resistance to power and he wasn't comfortable with highly structured organisations. They also represent different types of trajectories; Thomas has a trajectory closer to Dilek's (abeyant) and Lisa's mostly resembles Marius (consistent) trajectory.

Despite the profound differences in their trajectories and in their activist profiles, Thomas and Lisa share a number of beliefs, practices and attitudes. Firstly, they share the belief that it makes sense to engage in political activism. Whether from a contentious or a conform attitude, they both believe in the relevance and the place of political action, and they have been part of (more or less organised) collective initiatives that promote and pursue specific political ideas, initiatives and which stand for specific ways of articulating their own claims and grievances. Second, they share a feeling of commitment and a perception of relevance in what they do as their engagement, whether it is in partisan politics, in political education, demonstrations, graffiti art, etc. Thirdly, they have developed a taste for action and deliberation and learned to critically frame discussions and debates.

Furthermore, they have both gone through a process of incorporating new skills and routines that also means they can improvise and act consistently with the sets of beliefs and actions they have learned. Lisa learned to organise the meetings, understood abbreviations and procedures, Thomas learned about privacy, understanding political debates and finding his own place within political debates. While Lisa has incorporated the routine of drafting proposals and organising meetings, Thomas has become accustomed to attending demonstrations, blogging, organising debates and even graffitiing. Thomas, as the other activists tending towards contentiousness, expressed scepticism towards the conventional instances of participation and of the role of political parties as instruments of change, but they didn't express this as anti-political or apolitical posture: because they all had issues of concern, they all wanted to contribute to change, they all sought to remain informed, and, in their own way, believed in the possibility of change. Furthermore, Lisa and those closer to her are not only inspired by the idea of preserving representative democracy, but they also revealed a desire for change, making the parties more attractive to young people, increasing participation of women, tackling the environmental and housing crises, etc. Furthermore, even activists like Lisa, who had broader platforms and were mobilised by an interest in leadership or community engagement (instead of concrete issues) have some favourite topics and concerns. Just like some of the others, who have been strongly linked to single issues, have expanded their interests as well. For both Lisa and Thomas, as for the rest, political activism has become part of their lives; it connects with their personal networks, but also with their general views.

The other activists can be found in between these two ideal-typical models of an activist profile; Marius and Dilek come closest to the ideal-typical profiles presented by Lisa and Thomas, with subtle variations; Dilek had, like Thomas, a contentious attitude and engaged in contentious actions (as defined throughout this chapter) but she also engaged within more established instances such as SDS and the student parliament.

Ludwig and Juan had developed similar habitus and moved around similar spaces in the SAF of young activism; along the poles of reproduction and professionalism, close (but not linked) to the dominant instances of the field. Both had conform and solid habitus; they had strong a strong role/ organisational identification but they, did, nonetheless felt the need to start exploring the possibility of joining political parties. Juan and Ludwig linked their trajectories to institutionalised spaces of action in which they had roles of representation, mediation and imparting political education to other young people (JEP, JEF and ASTA).

Seyran has a contentious attitude given that a great part of his motivation comes from a defiance of specific power structures (like financial inequality and racism) but he has been a solid activist with a linear trajectory: he remained engaged at the organisation he first enrolled in, his political activism (and to great extent his further political socialisation) has been directly linked to the union. Lastly, Seyran has followed an ascending trajectory in the union given that he has become a leadership figure, made contacts with the regional directives and he wishes to make this into his profession in the future.

Anna is another example of a mostly liquid and contentious attitude, even if, at the time of the interview, she had a dominant affiliation because her Women's Group was organising an important event, and this required intense commitment and cooperation. Anna has a contentious attitude which is most clearly expressed when she talks about her (direct and second-hand) experiences of inequality in the form being feeling she was fired from a job due to her sexual identity and through her job counselling young women and girls. conscious consumerism: Anna stressed that in order to successfully switch to more sustainable consumption practices, profound structural transformations are needed so that these new consumption patterns are not only affordable but also viable and match the demands of everyday life. At the time of the interview, Anna had a strong feeling of commitment to her lesbian organisation; partly (Women's Union) partly of the connection to her own identity and partly because she had an important role in organising an upcoming event.

7.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analytical reconstruction of the activists' trajectories and the types of activist habitus they had developed. Considering that activists narrated differentiated experiences and interpretations thereof, these ideal-typical trajectories and types of habitus were conceptualised around some ideal typical models: for the trajectories "abeyant experimental trajectories" vs. "lineal consistent trajectories" and for the types of habitus: "contentious liquid habitus" vs. the "conform solid activist habitus".

Much in consonance with the interactionist perspective (Snow 2001, 2013, Corrigan-Brown 2020, Polletta/Jasper 2001) the reconstruction of the trajectories shows how the activists presents activists' recollection of personal (life-story, grievances, identity, expectations, availability), organisational (internal structures, routines, tactics, inter-personal relations) and structural (big demonstrations, electoral processes, societal crisis, social dynamics of inequality, etc.) factors and how these factors patterned their interpretations of their experience. Albeit differently in each case, these trajectories showed that ideology was important in finding the group but not enough to stay; organisational routines, collective identities, personal dispositions played an important role in their interpretation of these initial stages (Corrigan-Brown 2012, 2020, Goodwin/Jasper 2015, Snow 2013, Crossley 2003, 2004). The decision to stay with a single organisation, combine affiliations or abandon a group were discussed within personal and organisational frames: being (or not satisfied) with the routines, having significant connections in the group, experiencing momentous life-changes that re-orient their activism (like Anna, to some extent, but also Thomas after becoming a father), expanding their own tactical and ideological expectations (like Sarah, Juan and Ludwig, and to some extent Thomas and Dilek).

These trajectories exposed the different actors, instances and circumstances that facilitated the politicisation, engagement and activist development as narrated by the interviewees. But beyond naming (mostly) the usual factors in their political socialisation, like peers, protest participation, parents, schools, universities, marginalised identities (Pilkington/Pollock 2018, Henn/Sloam 2017, Dalton 2017, Earl et al 2017, Klandermans et al 2008) the trajectories revealed different underlying concepts of participation. Ludwig and Marius exemplify a more conventional institutional model, because they attribute their political socialisation to parents, participation in instances of representation and volunteering, and their enrolment in conventional well-established instances of participation (Gaiser 2010, Dalton 2017). Furthermore, they frame connect their interpretation and motivation for activism to an idea of serving society and a taste for leadership and mediation. Conversely, other activists connected their socialisation to media, counter-discourses, and a call for social justice and grass-roots change (like Sarah, Dilek, Thomas and Anna) and they enrolled in so-called non-conventional instances (Pickard

2019, Dalton 2017, Spanning et al 2008). Lastly, trajectories were described as processes of constant interaction between three dynamic actors, namely the activist, the organisation, and the context. Consequently, activists described their trajectories as marked by constant socialisation, transformations, and reflection. The construction of the activist habitus is based on the types of transformations (in terms of acquiring context specific dispositions, connecting to networks, adopting frames of analysis, re-interpreting past and future, etc.

The ideal-typical habitus reflect the different spaces occupied in the SAF of youth activism, as well as the differentiated views of activism; some viewed this closer to experiencing forms of representative democracy and supporting existing procedure of participation (Gaiser 2010, Almond/Verba 1963, Patrikios/Shepard 2013) whereas other saw activism as a chance to challenge actors in power, create grass-roots networks, open spaces for new voices and impulse alternative lifestyles (Tarrow 2008, Tilly/Tarrow 2015, Pickard 2019). Furthermore, the type of activist habitus also revealed the type of collective settings in which activists prefer to engage (level of professionalisation and rationalisation, Davis et al 2005) as well as the inclination between expressiveness and effectiveness (paraphrasing Parkin 1968).

As explained in the theoretical chapter, the concept of habitus used for this analysis is closer to Crossley's (2003, 2004) activist habitus, than to Bourdieu's classical definition of the term (1984). Parting from Crossley's radical habitus and drawing from Bourdieu's forms of capital (1984, 2001, Swartz 1997) this chapter constructed the activist habitus as a form of secondary habitus, that is defined by adopting dispositions, frames of cognition, routines, networks, but also developing a taste for collective action, a critical perspective, an ethos that favours activism, and a belief in the worthiness of struggling for social change through their preferred instances and actions. Bourdieu's concept of capital comes into play because, as here conceived, the acquisition of context-specific dispositions doesn't merely result in activists being able to reproduce (or "coherently deform") discourses and practices, but also in an internal and external recognition of political competence which is as much defined by technical competence as deeply linked to social competence and status (Bourdieu 1984, 411). Bourdieu's conceptualisation argued that the people most likely to refuse political questions were those belonging to subordinated groups (working-class, lower levels of education, women, etc.) and he linked technical and social competence arguing that they are co-dependent and that those more likely to display technical competence and opine about politics, were also those with a recognised status as someone with "the right to speak" (ibid. 411-415). In that sense the narratives of transformations and growth, underlie a self-recognition as being both, technically and socially competent and thus, able to opine about political matters.

The links between trajectories, habitus and primary socialisation were only explicit in some cases: Seyran, Dilek and Thomas, who more vehemently stressed that they came from working-class backgrounds and who interpreted this as an important aspect of their identities fuelling their activism.

Anna, on the other hand, didn't come from a working-class background but she linked the rejection of her sexual identity to much of her political motivation, even though her start was in environmentalism. Likewise, Dilek, Seyran, Juan, and Thomas connected their lack of diffuse political learning in the family to their working-class backgrounds and Seyran, Juan and Dilek linked this to their migrant backgrounds. Interestingly, none of the activists explicitly called themselves "middle-class" whereas Thomas, Dilek, Juan and Seyran did described themselves as "working-class" or "poorer background" and those who (following the socio-demographic information they provided) were closer to the middle-classes, rarely alluded to this class background as something that affected their trajectories (or if they did, it was indirectly) whereas for the working-class activists, this was a defining trait in their identities. Even if they had gained significant cultural capital and social credit. This resonates with the conception of the middle-class the de facto neutral (Swartz 1997) and how this obscures symbolic power and symbolic violence.

Lisa, Marius, and Christian recognised the importance of their parents of role models in bringing them closer to the political parties. Some connections are also implicit, like Anna and Lisa who stressed economic support from their families, or Sarah and Christian who had the resources (know-how, contacts, money) to go abroad as volunteers and this experience created access to the spaces of activism. In addition, Seyran's clearest access to the spaces of activism was the workers' union, whereas Dilek and Thomas found theirs in the university spaces. To that extent, the spaces they entered in the social spaces shaped their access to different spaces of activism.

Perhaps the most salient link, and where the selective affinities become clear is between the trajectories and the types of habitus; trajectories tended to develop within similar spaces in the field (within the spaces of professional-contention or professional reproduction, spontaneous contention) with a few exceptions. Those who had positive experiences within the spaces of professionalism, were more likely to develop solid habitus; Seyran, Lisa, Marius, Christian, Juan, Ludwig. Still, these were all people who had a political socialisation linked to institutionalised and structured spaces, like instances of representation, workers' union, volunteering programmes, etc. Naturally, contacts, expectations and personal developments also play a role: Sarah also attributed much of her politicisation to her volunteering experience, but she knew someone who took her to *Viva con Agua*, and she claimed she had an interest in smaller and more expressive instances. On the other hand, those who developed liquid habitus claimed they couldn't really connect with large organisations (Thomas and Dilek) but in many cases they also had experience in less organised and more disperse circles of deliberation and protest (Dilek, Thomas, Anna), they had changing life- situations (Anna). Dilek's case is particularly salient because she reports about a very autonomous socialisation that was shaped by a bi-cultural upbringing and international discourses of resistance, and she remained interested in autonomous action and in international counter-discourses and frames.

8 Closing Remarks

Looking back at the document it is easy to think that qualitative work is never really finished; there is always someone else that could have been interviewed and, perhaps more importantly, there is always a new crisis and a new setting that might potentially re-shuffle the game. Therefore, and considering the pandemic turmoil that started shortly after the data collection, the positions and attitudes are to be regarded as contingent.

This work used Straussian GTM (1998, 2008) to analyse 17 qualitative interviews to provide thick descriptions and theoretical accounts of this data. Based on this analysis, I hereby presented an analytical account of the spaces of young activism in a major German city and this theoretical account was informed by the field/ habitus theoretical toolbox (Bourdieu 1984, Swartz 1997, Girling 2004, Crossley 2003, 2004, Fligstein/ McAdam 2012). To be more precise, Fligstein and Mc Adam's concept of SAF proved more appropriate for the conceptualisation of this data given the relational character with which they defined this term: a SAF as embedded in border SAFs and made up of smaller SAFs. This and the interactionist emphasis the authors give to their theory made it suitable for this analysis. Similarly, Crossley's (2003, 2004, 2005) characterisation of the activist habitus as a form of second nature that is developed through sustained interaction in activism seemed fitting for a characterisation of activism as an incorporated ethos. The analysis was split in two chapters: one focused on presenting the field, with its actors, dynamics, poles and closing mechanisms; and a second one presented the activist trajectories and the different types of activist habitus.

8.1 Main Findings

The analysis shows a shared conception that the spaces of activism are broad, diverse and with distinctive ideological and tactical profiles. These spaces of activism are conceptualised as a local field of young activism but as one which is porous and not fully consolidated given its dynamic nature and its embeddedness (and even dependency) with other fields of action. This SAF of young activism is directly linked to the field of politics (through the partisan organisations) and indirectly through instances of representation like the JR and the RPJ. Furthermore, the field of politics and the SAF of young activism constantly interact, given that, as many testimonies reveal, many (albeit not all) of its members engage in actions that either cooperate with political actors, react to the (in) action they perceive in the field of politics, or pose demands on them. In the sample represented here, the JUSOS, JU and SOLID were part that overlap of fields and their members most frequently reported about actions that in some way targeted (or reacted to) political actors. The analysis of the interviews suggests that the SAF of young activism can and is shaped by the state through different mechanisms and that the state SAFs can influence the internal dynamics. Furthermore, the study shows differentiated understandings of activism as well as differentiated actions and organisational forms (Tilly/Tarrow 2015, Tarrow 2008,

Gaiser 2010, Davis et al 2005). These were conceptualised around the contentious- conform and the professional- spontaneous axes. The graphical representation groups the organisations in dominant positions (reproduction- professional) relatively close to one another and it presented an area of the SAF which is more dynamic and less defined which is the space occupied by the contentious-spontaneous groups. It is precisely in this quadrant where more dynamism could be expected, and it is precisely in this quadrant that the FFF movement entered the SAF.

Despite having porous and blurred borders, the analysis identified closing mechanisms which are derived from the possession of different forms of capital and the social credit (symbolic capital) resultant thereof. Some interviewees alluded to a form of homology between fields (Bourdieu 1984, Swartz 1997) and argued that the SAF of young activism reproduces the same inequalities present in the field of politics and in the social space in general. Consequently, they claimed that this was the reason for the over-representation of male, middle-class, university-educated youngsters. In this vein, some interviewees suggested that the possession of capital (the financial and cultural) has a concrete dimension but also an effect over taste, lifestyles, and identities. As a result, some milieus (closer to a middle-class socialisation) were perceived as closer to, or more inclined to activism and political opinion. Financial and Cultural capital and their symbolic dimensions constitute closing mechanism. The ways in which activists described this closing mechanism linked (for example) cultural capital to technical knowledge, to socially recognised institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) as well as identities as belonging to certain milieus and a certain social recognition.

A further closing mechanism is the power to define: the power to define correct languages, themes and spaces for participation was seen as a mechanism that reproduces inequalities and acts as a closing mechanism in the SAF. The monopoly over the power to define the political topics, the right “Slang” to talk about politics, the spaces, and actions to express positions was associated to hegemonic definitions of politics (2010) conventional definitions of participation (Dalton 2017, Van Deth 2014) and middle-class style spaces and “slang” to discuss such issues and to participate. What the interviews suggest is that these definitions are taken and presented as de facto neutral (Swartz 1997) but they create additional (and unnoticed hurdles) for those who come from other milieus.

The second analytical leg to this study was the concept of the activist habitus, which was constructed along the contentious- conform and the liquid-solid continuum. These axes sought to generate a concept ample enough that it could coherently embark the diversity of activism in the city, the diverse forms of organisation, repertoires of action, definitions of activism, etc. The activist habitus was explained based on the opposition of two ideal-typical combinations; the liquid-contentious (Thomas) and the solid-conform (Lisa). These represent the different attitudes, actions, organisational forms, and interpretations that Lisa and Marius give to activism. The variations express much of the contrast between conventional and non-conventional repertoires of action (Pickard 2019, Dalton 2017, Van Deth 2014, Gaiser 2010).

The activist habitus is best explained with a metaphor: each dancing style is different, by they all involve moving harmonically to follow a beat. Even more, some styles are danced in couples, others individually and others in circles, but they all involve the same dynamic of drawing from a set of learned movements to respond to the music. In that style, an activist habitus implies the ability to identify a situation or a debate and draw from the context-specific cultural capital and repertoires of action, in order to respond to that situation with a discourse or an action coherent with the type of habitus each actor has. Just like a good dancer doesn't count steps and doesn't look at her feet, the activist habitus is internalised and, thus, activists don't necessarily need to make permanent consultations in order to identify what the actions and discourses consistent with their positions are. Naturally, as Crossley (2003, 2004) explained in his studies of the field of psychiatric survivors, activists don't arrive to social movements as "tabula rasa" but they bring their previous socialisation, experiences, and expectations with them. Therefore, an activist habitus should be interpreted as a secondary habitus that adjusts to the primary habitus and to the person's experience. Hence, the ways in which activists experience and live out their habitus is, just like the way dancers combine steps and twirls, an individualised matter.

Overall, this work proposes a conceptualisation of the SAF of young activism and of activist habitus broad enough that it fits an ample and robust understanding of participation (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019, Tarrow 2008). Likewise, these conceptualisations seek to stresses the differences and commonalities between conventional and non-conventional participation: the differences in terms of the spaces occupied in the field, the trajectories, the specific practices, and interpretation of the field, but the shared belief in the importance of organised action, the shared critical views and ethos that favour engagement and political deliberation. This SAF- Habitus perspective reconstructed he ways in which activists make sense of other actors, discourses and spaces in the field and define their place within it. The interactionist perspective zoomed into the self-perception and self-described transformations, which suggest important underlying commonalities for the activists but also showed how many of them experienced the field with its dynamics, spaces and closing mechanisms. The ideal-typical forms given to the trajectories and the habitus sought to establish comparable yet flexible theoretical constructs for the study of the different expressions of sustained activism (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019). Following Fligstein and Mc Adam's conceptualisation, the SAF is dynamic and actors in different positions can constantly move depending on their growth, but also depending on internal and external factors: the rise of the FFF movement mobilised opinions and alliances from other activists in the city (in this sample Murad from MLY and Suzanne from SOLID). Even more, a significant change in the political field, like smaller and newer parties coming into power, could potentially re-align the positions, re-define the positions of power and shift some of those in the pole of reproduction towards contentiousness or the other way around. Furthermore, organisations can transit into the professional pole, as some of the interviewees attest and this can also change their internal dynamics and the way they interact with other actors in the field.

8.2 Implications

This study builds on Crossley's activist or radical habitus by expanding it to non- protest organisations, such as the young wings of political parties, but also some of the new forms of participation (Van Deth 2014, Pickard 2019) because what the data reveals is that they all develop a form of habitus, a form of attachment, that groups and activists are dynamic and once they are engaged and moving within a field of action, they are likely to continue moving. In other words, actors in both protest- and non- protest participation, conventional and non-conventional activists develop a feel for the game and an ethos that makes them inclined to remain active, as Crossley conceived for protest participants. Additionally, the interviewees oftentimes defined themselves by referring to other forms of activism, even if only to affirm their conviction that they were in the correct forms of doing activism. Expanding Crossley's concept of radical habitus to activists with different profiles allows for theoretical construct that is flexible enough to embark something as dynamic as political activism in its diversity without losing sight of the commonalities which are stressed throughout this study. Furthermore, the field perspective is, despite its limitations, helpful in understanding activism as a meso-order of its own with contending definitions and actions. In addition, I agree with Crossley (2003, 2004, 2005) that when studying sustained participation, his concept of habitus can be a valuable tool for considering the importance of resources but also identities in social movements, particularly taking the perspective that resources are in fact linked to identities and have a symbolic dimension as well.

To some extent, the findings seem to confirm the "social movement society" thesis (Meyer/Tarrow 1997) given the proliferation and normalisation of protests, petitioning, blogging, and other repertoires of action as accepted forms of participation. The recognition that interviewees granted to *Greenpeace*, the flowering of new forms of environmental engagement and the growth that activists reported in *Einfach Leben*, *Zero Waste* and *Viva con Agua* suggest that these forms of engagement have become increasingly normalised and accepted, even if they don't enjoy the same level of recognition and dominance over the field as the more established actors. Even more, the recognition that some (like Anja from the JR and Murad from MLY) gave to FFF suggests that these protests were (partially) accepted and no longer seen as an expression of radicalism. Still, the HF protests bring nuance into this idea, given that these were widely criticised and even an organisation like *Greenpeace* decided not to offer official support.

The pervasiveness of this social movement society seems limited given that the data suggests that protests and creative forms of participation are very widespread, but these are mostly found among some of the groups further from the professional-reproduction segment of the SAF. The division of labour (those who support and reproduce procedures and forms of representative democracy and those who

challenge power, seek expansion of participation and challenge cultural norms) and visions of activism goes in a similar line to the thesis of the “two worlds of activism” (Busse et al 2015) but I would add based on my results that because of the dynamic character of the field, there are interesting examples of actors in between, like *Zero Waste* and *Viva con Agua*, two organisations that have been growing in the last decade and are now represented in several German cities. These are slightly more professionalised but not as much as the dominant actors and they engage in alternative forms of participation. These actors in between and their trajectories would be an interesting issue of analysis.

This analysis shows that actors in this SAF of activism seem to share Dalton’s thesis of ‘the participation gap’. This study shows that interviewees seem to share the view of numerous scholars that have shown the dominance of middle classes in activist circles (Parkin 1968, Dalton 2017, Pickard 2019, Mc Adam 1989). Even more, it shows how some of the working-class activists continue to see themselves as the exception to the rule which again connects with the habitus and identity perspective proposed by Crossley for the study of social movements (2003, 2004, 2005) and by Bourdieu for society in general (Bourdieu 1984, Swartz 1997, Girling 2004). The multi-factor perspectives that consider “different paths for the same place” (Bosi 2012, Bosi and Della Porta 2013) are also confirmed given that activists took different pathways to activism: some were biographically closer (Lisa, Marius, Christian) and for the working-class activists, universities, institutional projects, and the workers’ union were the decisive instances for socialisation and mobilisation. Furthermore, studies that connect serving in positions of representation to further activism (Patrikios/ Shepard 2013) could be expanded to include the caveats of those for whom these experiences had a negative connotation that even made them sceptical of the very instances of representation. Regarding the language barrier, this work confirms the findings of Arnold et al (2012) as they showed that young people in Germany find the language of politics too hard.

The incidence of personal, organisational, and structural factors in determining sustained activism (Corrigall-Brown 2012, 2020, Bunnage 2014) was also salient in this dataset, as was the construction of shared identities (Polletta/ Jasper 2001, Crossley 2003, Snow 2001, 2013). These shared identities, as well as ideological commitments and an ethos of participation (Crossley 2003, 2004) were indeed crucial in helping activists get through the difficult times.

This analysis did not seek to explain the dynamics of young activism within the classical frameworks of left-right political positions. Despite being amply discussed, updated, and questioned (Bauer et al 2017, Kroh 2007, Knudsen 1995) the right-left convention continues to have a significant explicatory power in discussing politics. Given that this study seeks to primarily understand how activists perceive themselves and the spaces of activism and considering that it deals with expanded definitions of politics the left-wing positions were not the aim of this study. Much more it was about understanding positions which are malleable and dynamic: if the form of governance radically changes, the ideology of certain “right” or “left” groups might remain the same but their positions in the field might be forcefully

redefined. Additionally, the goal was to provide concepts ample and robust enough to also eventually explain different forms of contentiousness and conform actions. The fact that some activists didn't really define themselves with these labels (only Murad, Dilek, Suzanne, Seyran and Thomas) is also salient. They defined themselves as leftists but Lisa and Thomas rather as pragmatic, which is their counterword to leftism. The analysis suggests that this is their way of placing themselves close to the centre or centre-right, but it is not clearly stated and this probably has to do with a certain aversion to the label "right". Besides this, some of the other activists didn't place themselves along these lines (Sarah, Anna, Juan and Ludwig) and even if they gave some cues into their thought, the information is not robust enough to place them on this continuum.

8.3 Challenges and Limitations

Qualitative studies are not representative and this one is no exception to that. In that sense, the first limitation to acknowledge is that it is not representative and that, due to the data protection commitments, the name of the city and the name of three organisations can't be revealed. I see this as a limitation because of the analytical potential that more city-specific information could have, especially more concrete information about organisational landscape, social life and about concrete dynamics that were taking place at the time.

Furthermore, as the authors clearly stated, the SAF analysis (Fligstein/ McAdam 2012) poses significant challenges for researchers, particularly when it comes to setting the boundaries for a field. In the case of activism and social movements this is even more challenging considering that these are, by definition, dynamic and contingent fields. This challenge refers to all boundaries: the boundaries to other fields, the geographic boundaries, age boundaries, etc. Considering this, the present findings could be expanded by further studies that conduct field analysis and target different organisations and segments of activism, or similar organisations from different age groups.

The sample can be a blessing and a curse: it is diverse enough that it provides contrasting perspectives and experiences, but it lacks organisational or sector specific depth. In that sense, further analyses could perhaps compare between two or three exemplary organisations and explore the nuances of the internal positions. Organisational positions in this study are given by the statements of their representatives, which is why an analysis with less organisations but more interviewees from each organisation could make the organisational characterisations much more robust and nuanced.

Lastly, the interviewees report about their lives as they remember them but perhaps also corresponding to how they want to be seen. Since this study takes an interactionist perspective, it is inevitable to

consider that perhaps the ways in which interviewees saw me (as part of a given social milieu, as an amicable figure, as a challenging figure, etc) might have altered their own self-presentation.

Considering that this was not a study that sought representation across the ideological spectrum as classically conceived, this sample includes mostly activists within a centre- to left spectrum (even if this is hard to tell exactly in some cases) and there were no organisations or activists involved in political violence or profoundly radical postures, it would be interesting to expand field and habitus analysis considering activists closer to the right-wing spectrum and those in radical organisations.

8.4 Considerations

Initiatives seeking to promote and study young participation necessarily benefit from an inter-sectional perspective but one which is also co-determined: it is the youngsters who are to define themselves (or not) as migrant, queer, female, diverse, etc. In that sense, researching youth and creating initiatives for youth need to consider identities as something malleable and fluid and not as a fixed category to be defined externally. Even more, the definitions of political issues and even the division between materialistic- post materialistic concern should be seen flexibly; many of the contending factions within feminism and environmentalism show how so-called post-materialistic concerns can be articulated within class frameworks.

Secondly, any attempt at encouraging participation needs to understand that language matters; if you want people to understand you, you should use simple words. That's one of the lessons I got from conducting the interviews. Both young participants and local stakeholders stressed the 'linguistic hurdles' faced by many newcomers when they first try to enter the spaces of activism; many felt overwhelmed and left out by the 'intellectual and complex language' used in political discussions and activist circles. This supported the assumption that politics is the matter of the educated affluent minorities. There are a few initiatives attempting to tackle this issue, the Federal Agency for Political Education publishes handbooks written in "simple language" and they are using YouTube and Instagram videos (see: [Abdelkatie - YouTube](#)) to explain political topics in direct language. Still, the matter of adopting a simpler and more direct language shouldn't be limited to social media and any attempt at including new voices also needs to part from expanded notions of participation and from grass-roots definition of the problems. This raises a question for the future, and it is about the struggle for the power of definition in times of social media.

Thirdly, it is clear from the criticisms expressed by participants that the deficit approach to non-participation (ie. the assumption that some groups lack the correct and legitimate languages, themes, access, et) should be reconsidered. Perhaps considering the changing demographics, the rise of different concerns and identities, the question about the legitimate forms of cultural capital needs to be posed at the experts and those in dominant positions; that is, perhaps the study and the promotion of participation

would benefit from those who have the power to define gaining different forms of cultural capital that makes them more competent and effective in understanding the new forms and themes of participation, in particular those of traditionally marginalised groups.

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10 Annexes

10.1 Annex I Activists' Trajectories

Life Before Participation	Mobilisation	Sustained Participation	Impact
<p>Christian grew up in Southern Germany. His mother was a former Green party member and interested in environmentalism. His father was involved in social projects.</p>	<p>-2015 joined Greenpeace, he wanted to do something and liked the group's reputation.</p>	<p>-He is motivated because he likes the organisation's structure, image and the other activists. And because he has made new friends.</p>	<p>Personal: He has learned a lot about environmental problems and has become a more 'conscious consumer'</p>
<p>As a child an adolescent he was very interested in football and liked to spend a lot of time outdoors with his friends.</p>	<p>-Joined working group for renewable energy.</p>	<p>-He enjoys the activism: he mentioned even when he is tired he is happy to go to the meetings and see the other activists.</p>	<p>He has less materialistic goals. He feels good about making a contribution and doing something good in his free time.</p>
<p>Turning points: -Iraq war -Attending demonstrations -Arab Spring -Year in South America as a volunteer: awareness of global inequality. -Moving to (city)</p>	<p>-Joined Food Sharing</p>	<p>He is also motivated by his own conviction about the importance of environmental protection and 'climate justice'.</p>	<p>He feels a stronger commitment to Greenpeace since he took a position of responsibility.</p>
	<p>-2017 became a spokesperson for one of the working groups</p>	<p>Taking on a more 'visible role' within the organisation has also been a motivating factor.</p>	<p>Social: He has broadened his social circle and become more sociable</p>
		<p>He remains active in Food Sharing and Greenpeace but devotes more time and greater efforts to Greenpeace.</p>	
		<p>Individual action: he joined some of the</p>	

Hambach Forest demonstrations as an individual activist because Greenpeace decided against this.

Life Before Participation

Mobilisation

Sustained Participation

Impact

Marius comes from a very small town in the north of Germany. His was a very tight community. It was traditional but open. He was involved in several extra-curricular activities: young volunteer for the fire department, business courses, sports. His father was a member of the CDU and he sometimes joined him when he attended meetings.

Turning points:
 Attending political meetings with his father.
 A political debate at school in which candidates from all political parties were invited.
 Moving away from home.

He joined the JU in 2014 when he moved to NRW for his first vocational training.

He chose the party, partly due to his father's influence, but also due to his reasoning that this was the best choice for him.

He was looking for new contacts but also for 'something useful' to do in his spare time.

In 2018 he also joined JEF.

Recently joined the CDU (mother organisation).

Joins different discussion groups.

Main motivation:
 -his belief in the party's principles, centrism and ways of doing things. He mentioned this specifically in regard to the Hambach Forest demonstrations.
 - his affinity with the other members and the fact that he has fun with this.
 -In JEF: he attends meetings but is a passive member. Still, he enjoys listening to other people's visions for Europe.

Individual action: he is a member of JEF but he is a passive one. He has some criticisms towards the party but is not really engaged in individual action.

Social: has met a lot of new people, made new friends and had a lot of fun.

Personal:
 -Has become a lot more articulate and developed the ability to listen to people with opposite views to his own.
 - He has learned to 'question' and 'test' his own positions. He has gained negotiation and social skills.
 -He is aware that the party needs to attract different and more diverse segments of the population.

-He is convinced that party politics are the most effective way of generating social change.



union and joined some demonstrations.
-Participating in a EU contest for young Europeans and being selected to go to Brussels and learn more about the EU.
-Brexit

Life Before Participation

Mobilisation

Interrupted/ Switched Participation

Impact

Dilek was born and raised in a big city in Germany. She comes from a working-class family of Turkish migrants.
 -She lived in a highly stigmatised neighbourhood.
 -She liked literature and hip hop very much so she learned a lot about history, society and politics by reading and listening to music.

Turning points in the process of politicisation -the tense climate of islamophobia she sensed after 2001.
 -Anti-Iraq war demonstrations because the school teachers had no tolerance for these and gave absents to the pupils who attended.
 -switching schools to avoid using the name of her highly-stigmatised district.
 -moving to her current city and enrolling at the university and attending her first political meeting.

As a first semester student she attended a meeting organised by the Left Party's university group. She thought this was the only party that was making racism a central issue.

She quickly disengaged because she was disappointed by the group and she felt she didn't really understand a lot of the jargon they used.

Mobilisation

Worked with organisation for female migrants and became interested in feminist topics.

After two semesters, she returned to the party. This time she felt a lot more confident about her own knowledge of political jargon and remained engaged for two and a half years. She was particularly interested in discrimination and intersectionality.

She was a member of the student parliament for two years.

She realised that she wasn't comfortable with the party's group and a lot of ways of presenting issues. Likewise, she started to feel more distanced from her feminist group; partly because of personal differences but also because of ideological differences.

Independent action:
 -She started her own student association for "peoples of colour" but the funding was suspended.
 -continues to attend environmental protests as an independent.
 At the time of the interview, she identified as an independent activist.
 When we met for the second time, she had returned to the party and taken a position of leadership.

Sustained Participation

Social: she has met many different people, mentioned that "she could get a group together for almost any topic"

Personal: she has learned a lot about politics and about how the parties and other organisations work and gained a lot of confidence, social skills, and self-esteem.
 -She had taken a long time to complete her studies.

Profound critical attitude and the feeling that she doesn't need an organisation to be an activist.

Impact

Life Before Participation

Lisa grew up in a city in NRW, in a liberal-leaning middle-class family. She liked mountain hiking and reading. Her parents are members of the SPD and her brother also became a member.

Turning points in the process of politicisation -
 -Watching the 2008 US election with her family; because it was very "dramatic".
 -Moving to a new city to start her studies.
 -Supporting the SPD campaign at a local election in 2015.
 -Going to the welcome meetings organised by the campus JUSOS.
 -Experiencing the arrival of refugees in 2015 as a volunteer and activist.

She was invited to her first meeting by a friend.

She became active right from the start.

She joined the working group for economic policy, the feminist group and is also part of JEF

In JEF but has a passive role: she mostly pays the fees and sometimes attends the meetings.

She is very motivated because she identifies with the party and the people. She identifies with its principles, particularly feminism.

After she moved her current city, she sought the local party group. Changing cities made her realise how diverse the party is and how different the factions are.

She is in her district's board of directors and her themes are Europe and economics.

Individual action: she has some criticisms towards the JUSOS and is a registered member of JEF but she is only active in the party.

Social: She has made a lot of new friends but also learned to deal with different opinions and positions.

Personal: she has gained empathy and a sense of self-worth.
 -Activism has helped her become more organised with her time and learn how to draft and coordinate projects and proposals.
 - She feels she can argue better.

She has a critical understanding of situations and thinks the party is supposed to propose solutions and not just be against things.

Life Before

Mobilisation

Sustained

Impact

Participation

Sarah comes from a small city in Eastern Germany. Her family was liberal and non-religious, but they were not particularly political nor was her school. She enjoyed spending time with her friends and was part of a sports club when she was growing up. She studied in Southern Germany and moved to her current city in 2009 for work. She was always interested in social justice and the environment.

Turning points in the process of politicisation
Spending a year as a volunteer in Central America involved in "social projects and activist circles".

Moving to her current city.

After moving to her current city, she started attending the fair-trade fairs and learning more about fair trade products. She occasionally attended demonstrations.

2014- Central America

2015 joined Viva con Agua and Food Sharing.

She was missing something more directly related to wastefulness, so in 2018 she joined Zero Waste.

Participation

She is still part of "Viva con Agua" and of Food Sharing.

She is engaged and motivated by the possibility of promoting a less-consumerist life style, promoting more awareness of the social and environmental costs of the products of daily consumption.

She is in charge of the communications strategy and organising events that promote fair trade and exchange: she has organised cloth-exchange parties, fair trade flea-markets and created videos showing people how to do or repair things themselves.

She also supports the group in their cooperation with repair-café, where people exchange skills and learn how to fix the things they have.

She joined recently but is nonetheless happy with the positive atmosphere and the challenge of helping shape the group and making the events work.

She has come to question her consumption even more and try to purchase fair clothes, exchange and repair them and avoid fast fashion.

She has noticed that it is important to make activism fun and interesting and to avoid lecturing people about their habits.

She chooses to work as an independent in order to have more flexible schedules.

Life Before Participation

Mobilisation

Sustained Participation

Impact

Seyran was born in an industrial city in the province of Nord Rhine Westphalia. He describes his family as a “working class family of refugees”. His father had a strong sense of justice and encouraged his children to be active. He describes his adolescence as very average “doing this kids like to do”

Turning points in his politicisation:
 His father strong sense of justice and political awareness influenced him to run for student representative.
 His disappointment when he realised student reps. were not really taken seriously at school.
 Being bullied at his first job and being unfairly fired.

He started another traineeship and there he joined the union.

He enjoyed attending the seminars and meetings and learned about the union. He was elected as the union’s youth rep. at his company.

Last year he was elected for a position of leadership in the union’s regional youth group.

He used to be in charge of mediating between his company’s young trainees and the union.

He also supported initiatives to promote the integration of refugees to the workforce.

He is now in charge of organising the welcome meetings for new trainees in different companies, he also organises seminars and workshops for people who want to learn more about the union and he represents the youth branch to the rest of the union.

He is motivated because he believes in the importance of tackling inequality and because the union has become a big part of his life.

Individual action: he is not engaged in any other organisations. He has considered political parties (Left and SPD) but was not really convinced.

Personal:
 -He has experienced a growth in his self-confidence and a shift in his priorities since he is now more interested in union work than in his job.

-He would like to work with the union at some point.

-His values have changed: he sees himself as less materialistic, better informed and more empathetic

-He got his grammar school diploma and wants to go to university.

Social: He claims he has a completely new group of friends.

-Spends a lot of time with other union members and joked that “this could be the reason why he is still single”

Life Before Participation

Mobilisation

Sustained Participation

Impact

Thomas was born in a rural area in NRW to a working class family. He describes himself as a "very uninterested pupil" who was not very motivated by school work. He liked to play sports and as an adolescent he started attending summer camps coordinated by a Christian organisation. At some point he became a tutor at these camps. His family was not particularly political.

Turning points in his politicisation:
Working at the summer camps with young people made him aware of the great inequalities in society.
Starting his studies and noticing inequalities in the education system.
Attending the students strike at the university.
Joining Greenpeace
Abandoning Greenpeace
Starting discussion and skill exchange sessions with his friends.
Starting "Einfach Leben" with some of his best friends-

After the student strikes, he decided to join Greenpeace.

He soon realised that he didn't like the hierarchies and the fixed structures in this group.

He started attending less and becoming more of an independent activist.

He is very motivated by the positive atmosphere in the group and also by the feeling of commitment because it is a small group and it is important to keep it alive.

This is to some extent his project so he feels a commitment.

Still, he is trying to be less involved in administrative issues.
He mentions he has had different stages in his activism: sometimes he was more active and at other times less so.

He is motivated by his belief in civil society and "the importance of helping society from below".

Individual action: he stressed the importance of symbolic and individual actions that make people think. He attended the Hambach Forest demonstrations as an independent activist.

He has strengthened his bonds with the other members of the group. created very strong he has become more flexible, more patient and open.
He has learned about discussion strategies and encrypted messaging.
Activism has taken a lot of time and energy and during the first year of his PhD he dedicated a lot of time to activism.

He is now a father and has a new job so he is aware that he won't be able to dedicate as much time to the activism as he used to, but he also wants to remain active continue supporting the group and attending demonstrations he considers important.

10.2 Annex II Questionnaires for the Biographical Interviews

Topic	General	Further questions	Further questions on the topic, possible information.
<i>Anfang</i>	Kannst du mir allgemein kurz etwas über dich erzählen?		
<i>Alltag vor der Teilnahme an dieser Gruppe</i> <i>Erziehung: Familie, Freunde, Schule, usw.</i>	<i>Wie war dein Alltag bevor deinem Anfang hier?</i>	<i>Kannst du mir ein bisschen über deine Familie erzählen? Deine Eltern, Großeltern, Geschwister?</i> <i>Welche Themen habt Ihr zu Hause besprochen?</i> <i>Wie würdest du deine Erziehung beschreiben? Streng oder weniger?</i> <i>Interessiert sich deine Familie für Politik?</i> <i>Kannst du mir etwas über deine Schulzeit, deine Schulfreunde erzählen?</i> <i>Waren die Leute in deiner unmittelbaren Umgebung politisch aktiv?</i> <i>Warst du damals Vereinsmitglied? Vielleicht bei einem Sport- oder Musikverein? Religiöse Gruppen?</i> <i>Was ist deine erste politische Erinnerung?</i>	
<i>Initial activist involvement /recruitment process /shift in the life experience</i>	<i>Wann hast du angefangen dich sozial und politisch zu engagieren?</i>	<i>Warum hast du dich für diese Gruppe und nicht für andere entschieden?</i> <i>Haben soziale Medien eine Rolle gespielt?</i>	<i>Und deine Freunde? Sind die auch engagiert? Warum? Gibt es Gründe dafür, dass sie sich nicht hier engagieren?</i>

<p><i>[for first organisation they were involved with]</i></p>	<p><i>Wie kam es dazu?</i></p>	<p><i>Was hast du zu der Zeit sonst noch in deiner Freizeit gemacht?</i></p> <p><i>Gab es Herausforderungen oder Hürden für dein Engagement hier? Welche?</i></p> <p><i>Haben sich deine Beziehungen zu Familie und Freunden auf Grund deinem Engagement verändert?</i></p> <p><i>Hat sich irgendwas verändert?</i></p>	<p><i>(Fragen ob ihn/sie die Krise motiviert hat?)</i></p> <p><i>Warst du von der Finanzkrise direkt betroffen?</i></p> <p><i>Hat das dein Engagement motiviert?</i></p>
<p><i>If there was then a change in participation / participant evolution</i></p>	<p><i>Gibt es einen Grund warum du die Organisation gewechselt hast? – oder – Gibt es einen Grund für die Verschiebung in deinem Engagementsniveau?</i></p>	<p><i>Wie lange warst du bei der ersten Gruppe aktiv?</i></p> <p><i>Haben sich deine Aktivitäten verändert?</i></p> <p><i>Hat sich dein Alltag verändert?</i></p>	
<p><i>Sustained participation / daily life as a participant</i></p>	<p><i>Wast ist deine Motivation aktiv bei dieser Gruppe zu bleiben?</i></p>	<p><i>Kannst du deine Tätigkeiten für diese Organisation beschreiben? Wie lange machst du das schon?</i></p> <p><i>Wie würdest du die Struktur und Verwaltung dieser Gruppe beurteilen?</i></p> <p><i>Hat diese Organisation Arbeitsgruppen oder Initiativen für Geschlechterthemen? Spielt sowas eine Rolle für dich?</i></p> <p><i>Wie hat sich dein Alltag und dein Privatleben seitdem du hier angefangen hast verändert?</i></p> <p><i>Wie ist dein Verhältnis zu den anderen Aktivisten?</i></p> <p><i>Wie wichtig ist diese Gruppe für dich und für dein Selbstbild?</i></p>	<p><i>Do you think your experience has been any different to activists in the past?</i></p>

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Wie spiegeln sich deine Werte in deinem täglichen politischen und sozialen Leben wieder?</i>	<i>Bist du auch online aktiv? Wie? (Facebook Gruppen, Online Petitionen)</i>	<i>Ist Social Media ein wichtiges Tool für die Gruppe und für deinen Aktivismus?</i>
<i>Multiple participation</i>	<i>Bist du noch bei anderen Organisationen aktiv?</i>	<i>Wie koordinierst du deinen Aktivismus bei beiden? Ist das problematisch? Gehen Schwierigkeiten damit einher?</i>	
<i>In case of disengagement /participant evolution</i>	<i>Wann hast du deinen Aktivismus abgebrochen? Wann?</i>	<i>Hat sich da etwas in deinem (privaten) Leben verändert? Inwieweit hast du dich zu dem Zeitpunkt mit der Organisation identifiziert? Sympathisierst du noch mit den Zielen der Organisation? Hast du dein Engagement eher allmählich oder plötzlich beendet? Hat sich dein Leben seitdem verändert?</i>	<i>Hat sich deine Selbstwahrnehmung dadurch geändert? Hast du noch Kontakt zu jemandem von XXX?</i>
<i>Impact</i>	<i>Wie hat sich dein Leben durch dein politisches Engagement verändert?</i>	<i>Hat das deine Lebensziele beeinflusst? Haben sich deine politischen/ sozialen Ansichten verändert? Hast du den Eindruck, dass du dich als Aktivist weiterentwickelt hast? Was hast du durch deinen Aktivismus gelernt? Hast du konkrete skills gebraucht?</i>	
<i>Future</i>	<i>Kannst du dir vorstellen, politisch/ sozial aktiv zu bleiben? Was könnte dein zukünftiges Engagement verhindern?</i>		

<p><i>Socio-demographic issues</i></p>	<p><i>Wie alt bist du?</i></p> <p><i>Wo kommst du her? Wo bist du aufgewachsen?</i></p> <p><i>Wo kommen deine Eltern her?</i></p> <p><i>Was Machen deine Eltern beruflich?</i></p> <p><i>Was ist dein Bildungsstand?</i></p> <p><i>Bist du arbeitstätig?</i></p> <p><i>Hast du einen Partner? Und Kinder?</i></p>		
<p><i>Ending</i></p>	<p><i>Wenn du die ganze Zeit die du mit dieser Gruppe verbracht hast woanders investiert hättest, was denkst du das du gemacht hättest?</i></p> <p><i>Gibt es etwas Wichtiges, über das wir noch nicht gesprochen haben, über das du noch berichten möchtest?</i></p>	<p><i>Gibt es weitere Aktivisten/innen in deiner Gruppe die ich ansprechen sollte?</i></p> <p><i>Hast du Fragen an mich?</i></p>	<p><u>Only in case the respondent has not provided enough info:</u></p> <p>In order to summarize some how: if you could try to picture your life as a line, what are the most important events?</p> <p>Why are these the most important and what happened?</p>

10.3 Annex III Questionnaire for Organisational Interviews

Offene Fragen	Folgefragen und Checkliste
<u>1. Einleitung und Gruppen-/ Organisationsaktivitäten</u>	
a) Können Sie sich und Ihre Gruppe/ Organisation bitte kurz vorstellen?	Ist die Gruppe/ Organisation direkt an Politik / politischer Mobilisierung beteiligt?
b) Können Sie mir etwas über Ihre Arbeit in dieser Gruppe/ Organisation erzählen?	Was sind Ihre Rollen und Aufgaben? Haben Sie zuvor bereits Erfahrung mit dieser oder ähnlicher Art von Aktivität gesammelt? Seit wann engagieren Sie sich in dieser Gruppe/ Organisation?
<u>2. Erfahrungen mit Beteiligung von Jugendlichen</u>	
a) An wen richtet sich Ihre Organisation/ Gruppe? (Zielgruppen)	

<p>b) Welche Rolle spielen Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene in Ihrer Organisation / Gruppe?</p>	<p>Sind sie Ziel von Veranstaltungen, Aktivitäten u./o. öffentlicher Kommunikation?</p> <p>Gibt es bestimmte Kampagnen, die speziell an Jugendliche gerichtet sind?</p>
<p>c) Können Sie beschreiben, welche Erfahrungen Ihre Organisation / Gruppe mit Jugendlichen als Zielgruppe/Teilnehmer bei Veranstaltungen gemacht hat?</p>	<p>Unterscheiden sich junge Mitglieder / Leistungsempfänger von anderen Zielgruppen?</p> <p>Sind andere Unterschiede (Geschlecht, ethnischer Hintergrund, soziale Klasse) wichtiger als Altersunterschiede?</p>
<p>3. Aktionsrepertoires</p>	
<p>a) Bietet Ihre Organisation/ Gruppe spezifische Formen zur Partizipation oder Aktivitäten für Jugendliche an?</p>	<p>Welche Art von Aktivitäten bieten Sie ihnen?</p> <p>Werden Veranstaltungen/ Aktivitäten für Jugendliche anders organisiert (gibt es z. B. spezielle Mitgliederformulare, spezielle Kampagnen, spezielle Abteilungen / Ausschüsse usw.)?</p>
<p>b) Probiert Ihre Organisation/ Gruppe auch alternative Wege aus, um Jugendliche zu erreichen und sie in die Organisation und deren Aktivitäten einzubinden?</p>	<p>Interne Dimension:</p> <p>Haben Jugendliche neue Formen der Partizipation in Ihrer Gruppe/ Organisation gefordert/ vorgeschlagen?</p> <p>Externe Dimension:</p>

	<p>Organisieren Sie neue, alternative, innovative Kampagnen oder Aktivitäten, um Ihre Stellung in der Öffentlichkeit zu verbessern und politische Institutionen zu erreichen?</p> <p>Gibt es einen Versuch, das anderswo zu replizieren?</p> <p>Können Sie uns etwas über die Auswirkungen der innovativen Initiativen in Ihrer Stadt, Region, Land erzählen?</p>
<p>c) Bieten Sie digitale Beteiligungsformen?</p>	<p>Versuchen Sie neue Formen der internen Demokratie/ Methoden zur Entscheidungsfindung?</p> <p>Gibt es digitale Partizipationsmöglichkeiten? Verwendet die Organisation soziale Medien? Hat die Organisation eine spezifische Kommunikationsstrategie?</p>
<p>d) Haben junge Menschen andere Bedürfnisse und Vorlieben?</p>	<p>Hat die Jugend mit bestimmten Missständen und Problemen zu kämpfen?</p> <p>Interessiert sie sich für etablierte Politik?</p> <p>Haben sie einen anderen Zugang zu Politik/ pol. Partizipation?</p>

	<p>Haben sie bestimmte Präferenzen in der Art und Weise, wie sie politisch handeln oder kommunizieren?</p> <p>Sehen sie sich als Mitglied einer Generation? Gibt es eine gemeinsame Identität?</p>
<p><u>4. Sozialer Kontext und jungendliches Engagement</u></p>	
<p>a) Arbeitet Ihre Gruppe/ Organisation regelmäßig mit anderen Gruppen oder Organisationen zusammen? Können Sie Formen der Kooperation beschreiben?</p>	<p>Was ist mit der Zusammenarbeit mit politischen Institutionen (Gemeinde, Provinz- oder Regionalregierung oder Zentralregierung)?</p>
<p>b) Denken Sie, dass die öffentlichen Behörden / Politiker in Ihrer Stadt die Bedürfnisse und Interessen von Jugendlichen/ junge Menschen ausreichend berücksichtigen?</p>	<p>Welche Bedeutung hat Jugend in der politischen Agenda der lokalen Politik / Verwaltung?</p> <p>Können Sie lokale Politik oder Verwaltungsentscheidungen benennen, die besonders schädlich für Jugendliche/ junge Menschen waren?</p> <p>Sind Behörden daran interessiert, das Engagement der Jugend in Politik und Zivilgesellschaft zu stärken?</p> <p>Können Sie besonders wichtige (unterstützende) Gruppen oder Institutionen benennen? Und diejenigen, die weniger hilfreich sind?</p> <p>Hat die Unterstützung dieser Behörden ihrer Meinung nach einen speziellen Grund? (Intention/ Absicht)</p>

	<p>Haben diese Maßnahmen und Entscheidungen (positiv oder negativ) Auswirkungen auf das Engagement von Jugendlichen/jungen Menschen?</p> <p>Sind Sie der Ansicht, dass unterschiedliche politische Maßnahmen und Verwaltungsentscheidungen zur Verbesserung der Situation beitragen könnten? Und welche?</p>
<p>c) Wie würden Sie die öffentliche Meinung in Ihrer Stadt in Bezug auf junge Menschen beschreiben?</p>	<p>Sind Jugendliche (oder spezielle Gruppen von Jugendlichen) stigmatisiert? Machen sie Diskriminierungserfahrungen?</p> <p>Wie gut entwickelt sich die Zivilgesellschaft in Ihrer Stadt? Und spielen diese Organisationen und Gruppen eine positive Rolle bei der Förderung des Engagements von Jugendlichen? Oder begrenzen sie es?</p> <p>Trägt die lokale Wirtschaft zur Förderung des Engagements von Jugendlichen bei (z. B. durch Sponsoring oder eigene Initiativen)?</p>
<p>d) Haben Jugendliche in öffentlichen Debatten der Stadt einen Platz?</p>	<p>Sind sie in öffentliche Debatten Ihrer Städte vertreten?</p> <p>Sind sie in den Medien, auf Straßenveranstaltungen oder Diskussionen in den öffentlichen Bereichen der Stadt sichtbar?</p>

<p>e) Sind junge Menschen von sozialen Ungleichheiten betroffen?</p>	<p>Sind bestimmte Gruppen von Jugendlichen/jungen Menschen besonders betroffen?</p> <p>Sind insbesondere Anwohner bestimmter Stadtteile betroffen? Welche?</p> <p>Und beeinflusst dies das politische Engagement der jungen Bewohner?</p>
<p>f) Spricht Ihre Organisation/ Gruppe diese Probleme an</p>	<p>Was unternimmt Ihre Gruppe/ Organisation, um die Missstände und Probleme zu überwinden (die von (bestimmten Gruppen) junger Menschen erfahren werden?)</p> <p>Und entwickeln Sie auch Aktivitäten, um ausgeschlossene Jugendliche stärker in Ihre Organisation und in die Politik (im Allgemeinen) einzubeziehen?</p> <p>Was sollte Ihrer Meinung nach von (lokaler) Politik und Verwaltung unternommen werden, um dieses Problem zu lösen?</p>
<p>5. Abschlussfrage</p>	
<p>Gibt es noch etwas Wichtiges, was nicht angesprochen wurde, bzw. Sie hinzufügen möchten, damit wir die Arbeit Ihrer Gruppe/ Organisation für junge Menschen besser verstehen?</p>	

10.4 Annex IV Questionnaire for the Interviews with Local Stakeholders (Expert Interviews)

Offene Fragen / Stimuli	Folgefragen und Checkliste
<p><u>1. Einführung und Gruppen-/Institutionenaktivitäten</u></p> <p>Der einleitende Teil des Interviews sollte Informationen über diese Gruppe, ihre Aktivitäten und die Ebene/ Tiefe der Beteiligung des Interviewten mit seiner Gruppe / Organisation sammeln.</p>	
<p>a) Können Sie sich und den Bereich, in dem Sie tätig sind, kurz vorstellen?</p>	
<p>b) Können Sie mir etwas über Ihre Arbeit in dieser Institution / Gruppe erzählen?</p>	
<p><u>2. Engagement der Jugend in Stadt und vor Ort</u></p> <p>Der zweite Teil des Interviews sollte Informationen darüber sammeln, wie die Gruppe / Organisation / Sektor die Situation der Jugendlichen in der Stadt beschreibt, insbesondere die Beteiligung junger Menschen am sozialen und politischen Leben.</p>	
<p>a) Wie würden Sie die Ebenen und Formen von Jugendpartizipation im sozialen und politischen Leben der Stadt beschreiben?</p>	<p>Und in Ihrer Umgebung?</p> <p>Wenn Sie es mit anderen Städten vergleichen- funktioniert es dort besser oder schlechter?</p> <p>Gibt es Gruppen von jungen Menschen, die besonders engagiert sind. Und andere weniger?</p>
<p>b) Ist es notwendig, die Einbeziehung von Jugendlichen in soziale und politische Programme in Ihrer Stadt / Gemeinde zu verbessern?</p>	<p>Wenn ja: Was sind Ihrer Erfahrung nach die Hauptprobleme?</p> <p>Haben junge Menschen bestimmte / unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse und Vorlieben?</p> <p>Haben sie bestimmte Beschwerden und Problemen zu kämpfen?</p>

<p>c) Falls der Befragte ein junger Mensch ist: Wie bewerten Sie die Initiativen und die Beteiligung von Jugendlichen an sozialen und politischen Aktivitäten?</p>	<p>Kennen Sie einige wichtige politische oder soziale Initiativen, die von Jugendlichen und Jugendlichen geleitet werden?</p>
<p>c) Sind junge Menschen von sozialen Ungleichheiten betroffen?</p>	<p>Erleben Jugendliche in Ihrer Stadt besondere Missstände oder Probleme? Und in deiner Gegend?</p> <p>Sind bestimmte Gruppen von Jugendlichen besonders betroffen?</p> <p>Haben Sie ein Beispiel im Sinn?</p> <p>Und welche Faktoren spielen eine Rolle (ethnische Herkunft, soziale Schicht, politische oder sexuelle Orientierung etc.)</p> <p>Sind insbesondere Anwohner bestimmter Stadtteile betroffen? Welche?</p> <p>Und beeinflusst dies das politische Engagement dieser jungen Bewohner?</p>
<p>d) Adressiert Ihre Gruppe/ Institution diese Probleme?</p>	<p>Adressiert Ihre Organisation soziale Ungleichheiten, die junge Menschen in Ihrer Stadt erfahren?</p> <p>Was unternimmt Ihre Gruppe / Organisation, um die Benachteiligungen und Probleme zu überwinden, die von (bestimmten Gruppen) junger Menschen erfahren werden?</p> <p>Und entwickeln Sie auch Aktivitäten, um ausgeschlossene Jugendliche stärker in Ihre Organisation und in die Politik im Allgemeinen einzubeziehen?</p> <p>Haben Sie hierfür ein Beispiel?</p> <p>Was sollte Ihrer Meinung nach von (lokaler) Politik und Verwaltung unternommen werden, um dieses Problem zu lösen?</p>
<p>e) Arbeitet Ihre Organisation mit jungen Erwachsenen oder Initiativen zur Verbesserung ihrer Beteiligung an sozialen und politischen Aktivitäten?</p>	<p><i>Wenn "Nein", fahren Sie bitte mit dem nächsten Fragenblock fort.</i></p> <p><i>Falls ja:</i></p> <p>Welche Art von Aktivitäten bieten Sie ihnen?</p>

	<p>Welche Methoden der öffentlichen Kommunikation wählen Sie hierbei? Sind das spezifische Kampagnen, die an sie gerichtet sind?</p> <p>Welche Erfahrungen machen Sie mit Jugendlichen / jungen Erwachsenen als Mitgliedern, Wählern, Teilnehmern, Begünstigten, Mitarbeitern etc.?</p> <p>Sind andere Unterschiede (Geschlecht, ethnischer Hintergrund, soziale Klasse) wichtiger als Altersunterschiede?</p>
f) Probiert Ihre Organisation / Gruppe neue und alternative Wege, um Jugendliche zu erreichen und sie in die Organisation, sowie deren Aktivitäten einzubeziehen?	Haben junge Menschen neue Formen der Partizipation in Ihrer Gruppe / Organisation gefordert?
<p><u>3. Lokalen Chancenstrukturen von jugendlichen Engagement</u></p> <p>Dieser Abschnitt widmet sich dem sozialen und politischen Kontext, in dem die Organisation / Gruppe tätig ist. Wir interessieren uns für die Struktur der politischen Chancen, aber auch für das Verständnis der Rolle sozialer Ungleichheiten für das Engagement junger Menschen.</p>	
a) Denken Sie, dass die öffentlichen Behörden / Politiker in Ihrer Stadt die Bedürfnisse und Vorlieben der Jugendlichen ausreichend berücksichtigen?	<p>Welche Rolle spielt die Jugend auf der politischen Agenda der lokalen Politik / Verwaltung?</p> <p>Können Sie lokale Politik- oder Verwaltungsentscheidungen benennen, die besonders schädlich für die Jugend waren?</p> <p>Sind Behörden daran interessiert, das Engagement der Jugend in Politik und Zivilgesellschaft zu stärken?</p> <p>Haben Sie hierfür ein Beispiel?</p> <p>Können Sie besonders hilfreiche Gruppen oder Institutionen identifizieren? Und diejenigen, die weniger konstruktiv sind?</p> <p>Und gibt es Gründe, warum Sie denken, dass die Behörden betroffen / nicht betroffen sind?</p> <p>Haben diese Maßnahmen und Entscheidungen (positiv oder negativ) Auswirkungen auf das Engagement von Jugendlichen?</p>

	Sind Sie der Ansicht, dass unterschiedliche politische Maßnahmen und Verwaltungsentscheidungen zur Verbesserung der Situation beitragen könnten? Und welche?
b) Wie sehen Sie die Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft bei der Förderung des Engagements von Jugendlichen? [Werden hier Räume für das Engagement von Jugendlichen geschaffen?]	Fallen Ihnen Beispiele ein? Können Sie die Situation erklären? Was sind die Einschränkungen?
c) Wie sehen Sie die Rolle der lokalen Wirtschaft bei der Förderung des Engagements von Jugendlichen? Werden hier Räume für Engagement von Jugendlichen geschaffen?	Trägt die lokale Wirtschaft zur Förderung des Engagements der Jugend bei (z. B. durch Sponsoring oder eigene Initiativen)? Fallen Ihnen Beispiele ein? Wie bewerten Sie die Situation
c) Wie würden Sie die öffentliche Meinung in Ihrer Stadt beschreiben?	Wird das Engagement von Jugendlichen begrüßt? Sind Jugendliche (oder spezielle Gruppen von Jugendlichen) stigmatisiert? Machen sie Diskriminierungserfahrungen? Fällt ein bestimmter Sektor hier besonders auf? Gibt es in den lokalen Medien besondere Räume für junge Erwachsene und ihre Sorgen? Könnten Sie bitte einige Beispiele nennen?
d) Do young adults have a voice and visibility in street events and in the public debates? Werden junge Erwachsene in öffentlichen Veranstaltungen/ Debatten ausreichend repräsentiert?	Sind sie bei Straßenveranstaltungen vertreten(von unten nach oben organisiert)? (Aufführungen, Demonstrationen, Proteste usw.) Beispiele Sind sie als Hauptredner bei kulturellen und politischen Debatten anwesend, die in den öffentlichen Bereichen der Stadt und der Gemeinde (Museen, Theater usw.) stattfinden (top-down organisiert)? Beispiele

e) Wie sehen Sie die Rolle der lokalen Medien? Helfen sie jungen Erwachsenen, in der Öffentlichkeit vertreten zu werden?	
4. Abschlussfrage	
Hier sollten wir die Befragten motivieren, Gedanken hinzuzufügen, die wir nicht besprochen haben, um so auch sensible Themen für unsere Unterlagen zu sammeln. Falls man das Interview aufzeichnet, kann man hier vielleicht anbieten das Aufnahmegerät auszuschalten.	
Möchten sie noch etwas hinzufügen, was wir noch nicht besprochen haben, aber uns bei dem Verständnis der Arbeit Ihrer Organisation helfen kann?	

Zusätzliche Informationen/ Checkliste

Bitte stellen Sie sicher, dass Sie genügend Daten über den sozioökonomischen und demografischen Kontext Ihrer Stadt sammeln. Hierfür haben wir eine kurze Checkliste zusammengestellt.

Um diese Informationen zu finden, können Sie auf öffentliche Dokumente oder Online-Quellen zurückgreifen. Wenn Sie Zweifel haben, können Sie auch einen Ihrer Experten um Rat fragen.

- A. Wie viele Menschen leben in Ihrer Stadt?
- B. Wie viele von ihnen sind junge Erwachsene? Frauen? Migranten?
- C. Wie hoch ist die Arbeitslosenquote?
- D. Wissen Sie, wie hoch die Armutsrate und das BIP der Stadt sind?
- E. Welche politische Partei ist derzeit an der Macht?
- F. Welche hat die Mehrheit der Sitze im Stadtrat?