
MYPLACE



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Cluster 2: Anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-fascist movements

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1. Introduction

The composition of the cluster 'Anti-capitalist/anti-racist/anti-fascist movements' includes movements and organisations from a wide spectrum of left-wing politics ranging from centre-left to separatists and ultra/radical/far left. The defining feature of the cases is anti-discrimination ideas and politics (with an emphasis on anti-fascism). The cases analysed in this cluster have diverse genealogies and future prospects that sometimes contradict each other. The wide variety of ideologies, agendas, activities and organisational forms found across the synthesised cases is indicative of the heterogeneity of the cluster as well as the multiplicity of political interpretations of the contemporary Left in Europe.

The cluster contains 8 cases from 5 countries:

- Civil Society Network (eastern Germany)
- Ultra Football Supporters (eastern Germany)
- The Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans (western Germany)
- Anarchists (Russia)
- The movement for free education/ 'the blockade' of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Croatia)
- Anti-fascist punk activism (Croatia)
- ARRAN/CUP (Spain)
- Estonian Pirate Party and Estonian Internet Society (Estonia)

It is significant that almost every case includes several sub-cases (see Table 2.1), which makes the cluster relatively broad. The process of cross-case analysis is complicated, moreover, by the diversity in forms of leftist groupings presented by the case studies, which include: formal political parties (Popular Unity Candidates), Estonian Pirate Party); political organisations (Arran, Estonian Internet Society) and associations (Zagreb Association of Young Anti-fascists, Torpedo Syndicate Zagreb, Civil Society Network); (sub)cultures and non-institutionalised youth groups (Anarchists, members of punk bands, Ultra Football Supporters, Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans); and temporary youth mobilisations (Blockade of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences).

The meta-ethnographic approach suggested by Noblit and Hare (1988) and adapted for MYPLACE (see Introduction to D7.2), proposes that the synthesised cases can be related to each other in three ways: '(1) the accounts are directly comparable as reciprocal' translations, (2) the accounts stand in relative opposition to each other and are essentially "refutational", or (3) the studies taken together represent a "line of argument"' (Noblit, Hare 1988: 36). Despite (or due to) the diversity of data, while some of the cases in this cluster can be understood as 'reciprocal' (e.g. Anarchists, Russia and Antifascist punk activism, Croatia), most of the cases appear to be 'so different that some framework (i.e. a line of argument) is needed' (Noblit and Hare 1988: 36). The nature of the relationship is noted in the analysis that follows.

2. Scope of the data

2.1 Overview of data

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the scope of the data included in the cluster. The fieldwork in all of the cases included participant observation and interviews and, in some cases, is supported by relevant data from the Internet. The biggest challenge for synthesis resulted from the diversity of modes of coding and differences in the volume of data. The number of Level 2 Node Memos, on which the meta-ethnographic analysis was based, varied from 5 to 36 and the detail provided in Level 1 Node Memos varied considerably. Individual case study reports¹ were used to cross-check and supplement node memos where necessary.

Table 2.1

| | Name of the case | Groups, movements and organisations included | Scope of data | Number of Level 2 Node memos |
|---|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | ARRAN/ CUP (Spain) | ARRAN CUP | Dates of fieldwork: mid-October 2012 to April 2013 29 participant observations 30 semi-structured interviews | 34 |
| 2 | The Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans (western Germany) | Anti Dis AGF | Dates of fieldwork: March 2012 and August 2013 18 participant observations at plenary sessions 14 (13 male, 1 female) interviews with Anti Dis members 4 interviews with AGF members | 28 |
| 3 | Anti-fascist punk activism (Croatia) | Zagreb Association of Young Anti-fascists ; Torpedo Syndicate Zagreb; Members of punk bands and people | 46 participant observations at concerts and festivals 21 semi-structured interview Monitoring of social networks (Facebook, forum, blog) | 19 |

¹ These reports are published as: Ostojić (2014); Litvina (2014); Hashem-Wangler et al (2014); Estivill et al (2014); Dergić (2014); Vihma (2014); and Bescherer (2014).

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|---|--|--|--|-----------------|
| | | organise punk concerts and events | | |
| 4 | The movement for free education/ blockade of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Croatia) | Participants of the blockade of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences | Dates of fieldwork: 18 October 2012 to 4 July 2013 24 participant observations 18 semi-structured interviews | 12 |
| 5 | Estonian Pirate Party and Estonian Internet Society (Estonia) | Pirate Party EIK (Estonian Internet Society) | Dates of fieldwork: September 2011 and November 2013 Transcripts of several meetings; Transcripts of chat room conversations; Material from various sites on the Internet; Newspaper articles; Ethnographic fieldwork notes. 15 interviews (several respondents were interviewed repeatedly) | 5 |
| 6 | Anarchists | Young people who identify themselves as anarchists | Dates of fieldwork: February 2012 to February 2013 Number of observations: 52 entries Number of interviews: 28 | 36 |
| 7 | Civil Society Network (eastern Germany) | Members of Civil Society Network | Dates of fieldwork: June 2012 to April 2013 Number of interviews: 9 | 15 ² |
| 8 | Ultra Football Supporters (eastern Germany) | Members of Ultra Football Supporters | Dates of fieldwork: June 2012 to April 2013 Number of interviews: 6 | 15 |

² Coding was combined for CSN and UFS; the 15 node memos include both cases.

2.2 Introduction to organisations in the cluster

2.2.1 Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football fans (Anti Dis AG)

Anti Dis AG is a self-organised anti-fascist movement of football fans. In terms of its organisation, the group is independent of the official fan club of the Bundesliga Football club in northern Germany to which it is connected. However, it is financially supported and promoted by the Fan Project. On its website the Anti-Dis AG presents itself as 'fans against discrimination, who have formed this working group with the aim of drawing attention to discrimination in football, sensitizing fans and the public and encouraging people to challenge any form of discrimination.' The group was founded in March 2008 as an initiative of a group of ultras and a confederation of six youth organisations in the city. The trigger event for founding the Anti-Dis AG was an attack by Nazi hooligans on fans and ultras who hung out in the fan hall of the Football Club in January 2007.

2.2.2 Anti-fascist punk activism (Antifa punk)

This case incorporates three groups of punk activists: the Zagreb Association of Young Anti-fascists; Torpedo Syndicate Zagreb; and punk musicians and activists who do not belong to any formal organisation.

Zagreb Association of Young Anti-fascists (*Udruga mladih antifašista grada Zagreba*) (UMA) is a local anti-fascist youth organisation in Zagreb. It was established in 2002 as a youth branch of SABA (*Savez Antifašističkih boraca* - Alliance of Anti-fascist Fighters) and consisted mostly of young members of the SDP (Social Democratic Party of Croatia). In 2004, just a couple of years after its establishment, the organisation underwent a major change in leadership which led to changes in its membership also; young members of political parties were replaced by members of various youth subcultures. This organisation has existed for more than ten years, for the last five of which it has organised: the 'Antifa night' festivals; concerts featuring local and regional anti-fascist punk bands; and 6 Solidarity marches that gather approximately 300 people each year. They also publish an annual called 'Indomitable City'.

Torpedo Syndicate Zagreb is an independent non-profit collective that organises music events and promotes anti-fascism in the local community. It was established at the end of 2013 by some of the members of UMA.

People who regularly organise punk concerts and those who play or were playing in local punk bands. Some of the respondents belonging to this last group are members of distinctly anti-fascist punk bands, while some are members of punk bands that frame themselves as apolitical.

2.2.3 ARRAN/CUP

This case study includes two organisations from the radical-left separatist movement in Catalonia: Arran; and Popular Unity Candidates (*Candidature d'Unitat Popular*, CUP).

Arran is a youth political organisation of separatist left in Catalonia. Arran is a new organisation that was created in the summer of 2012 and today has close to 70 cores or organised assemblies involving around 700 young people. It appeared as the result of the merger of two now defunct groups: Maulets (separatist revolutionary youth); and the Coordinator of Assemblies of Separatist Leftist Youth (CAJEL). Arran's activity is radical in form and in content, as it supports the political aims of the radical separatist left through different types of political mobilisation and confrontation. Some of Arran's political activities are carried out on the edge of, and beyond, the law, and they combine a modern, transgressive and young image where young people often appear with their faces masked or in defiant stances. Besides posters, graffiti and specific actions, they also make constant use of social networks and the Internet.

Popular Unity Candidates (CUP) is an intergenerational organisation of the separatist left in Catalonia that combines political representation by running in local and regional elections in Catalonia and gaining elected posts, with powerful participation in civil society and social mobilisation. CUP is a political organisation that arose in 1986, but was not highly active until the beginning of the twenty-first century. It originated in a group of separatist leftists from different towns that ran in municipal elections to present an alternative to traditional parties in Catalonia. A number of candidates were put forward and by 2003, four municipal councillors had been elected. This figure rose to 27 by 2007 and to more than one hundred in 2011. The organisation also secured the election of mayors in four small towns. This case study is based on the Mataró branch of CUP, which was established by members of Maulets in 2003 and currently has one elected councillor.

Arran and CUP represent two sides of the same coin. While Arran represents youthful irreverence, the CUP maintains a sense of formality and a positive image, which it needs given its greater public exposure.

2.2.4 The Movement for Free Education/blockade of Zagreb's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences ('the blockade')

The blockade of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of University of Zagreb began on 20 April 2009 and lasted for 35 days. The students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences started a blockade at the faculty, preventing classes from taking place. The primary goal of their protest was free education or, rather, publicly funded higher education from undergraduate to post-graduate level. The students' takeover of the faculty, colloquially known as 'the blockade', was the first protest of this kind in Croatia. During the period of the blockade students at 20 universities and faculties across Croatia also protested in some way, with the same demands. Some 'took over' their educational institutions following the example of Zagreb's Faculty of Humanities, others organised various other protest actions as acts of symbolic support of the blockade in Zagreb.

2.2.5 Estonian Pirate Party (PP) and Estonian Internet Society (EIK)

This case study consists of two related organisations: the Estonian Pirate Party (PP); and the Estonian Internet Society (EIK). The EIK and the PP were founded almost at the same time (within a couple of months of each other in 2009) but with different objectives.

The Estonian Pirate Party is part of the Pirate Parties movement - a prominent new actor focusing on the perceived possibilities of the Internet in politics. The Estonian Pirate Party was founded in the tailwind of the success of the Swedish Pirate Party in the European elections. The 'incubation stage' of the PP lasted from the founding of the NGO in 2009 to its rejuvenation in late 2011 as a result of the rise of anti-ACTA sentiments. The founders of the PP were 4 young men in their 20s, studying at Tartu University and working in IT, most of them in the same small software development company. They founded the NGO on the example of Sweden, where the local PP had just entered the European Parliament.

The Estonian Internet Society (EIK) was initially an issue-oriented group founded to oppose an Estonian Internet legislation change (known as the domain reform). Its first action was a public letter to the government in 2010, in which the domain reform was criticized and corruption within the Estonian Internet Foundation was highlighted.

The EIK and PP are interconnected in a number of ways: most members of PP were also members of EIK; their daily practices often reacted to each other's activities; and their action and influence on mainstream politics often seems to depend on each other's existence (i.e. EIK was able to gain a foothold because, compared to the PP, their demands were moderate). Wider attention was drawn to the PP and EIK during the 'action stage', which started with heightened media attention towards the domain reform in early 2011 and the upcoming ACTA treaty in late 2011 and peaked with anti-ACTA protests on 11 February 2012. Throughout this stage, the main focus of the media was on the EIK, and the PP was given attention only during its re-founding in 2012.

2.2.6 Civil Society Network (CSN)

The Civil Society Network was founded in 2007. The network's origins are to be found amongst the ranks of political activists who organised blockades against the right wing festival of nations (Fest der Völker) in the autumn of 2007, as well as participants in the 'hard shoulder manifestation' in advance of this neo-Nazi event. This association of different groups of actors resulted from specific opportunity structures, such as the mass blockades against the G8. CSN consists of individuals with different social and cultural backgrounds. At the core of their various activities is the concept of civil disobedience. The group's monthly plenary meeting is open to the public, while access to the organising committee is restricted to experienced members. Participants in the network activities may join different working groups. The plenary is attended by up to 80 people; the organising committee started with about 15 participants but had shrunk to five-seven participants at the time of the field research. Well publicised and prepared blockades aim at preventing neo-Nazi demonstrations and the network seeks to combine determined action and low-threshold participation. Besides those major events the network participants arrange various other activities, such as discussions on right wing extremism, activities with reference to local history during National Socialism and, in collaboration with the Democracy Round Table (Runder Tisch für Demokratie) and the mayor, conferences on strategies against racism and discrimination. The network is very well connected to politicians, local government, the church, educational institutions, business and the media. Its public reputation is thus good.

2.2.7 Ultra Football Supporters (UFS)

The ultra group was launched in 2001, after the FCC (Fußball Club Carl Zeiss Jena) had been relegated. Primarily, UFS is a movement of football supporters. Based on notions of equality among supporters of one and the same football club the Jena ultra group seeks to establish an anti-racist culture inside the stadium. Their actions focus on creative activities during football matches designed to encourage the team. The anti-racist stance of the group is propagated by resisting rightist slogans and outfits and promoting its own slogans, banners, buttons etc. Through participation in UFS, young football supporters become involved in an autonomous, non-institutional kind of engagement with rightist youngsters. The UFS is well-organised; there are a total of 60 permanent members of the main group and the junior group.

2.2.8 Anarchists

Anarchists have become one of the most striking and ambiguous youth solidarities in Russia. Anarchists have been at the forefront of protest movements in Russia as well as in many European countries recently through public appearances, direct actions, projects aimed at rethinking everyday life and shocking art performances - all of which attract the attention both of mainstream young people, who are actively co-opting the image of 'new revolutionaries', and government institutions. Young left-wing radicals are perceived as 'Pandora's box': on the one hand, romanticised rebelliousness is attractive; on the other, it signifies radicalism and frightening uncertainty. The central idea of contemporary anarchism is the proposition that society can and should be structured without governmental power or state institutions. The act of protest then appears as the main consolidating idea - protest against social inequality and the unequal distribution of wealth and resources which arise out of capitalist hegemony. Actual anarchistic ideas are conceptualised on the basis of anti-capitalism, anti-discrimination (with a focus on anti-fascism and anti-speciesism) and anti-statism. Anarchist solidarity is characterised by diversity; thus it was important to this study to include representatives of different anarchist traditions in the sample: both (sub)cultural actors (punks, straight edgers, antifascists); and those who have nothing to do with subcultures (anarcho-feminists, anarcho-communists and those who deny all nomenclature). The anarchist scene is heterogeneous, being composed of many different affinity-groups, initiatives and organisations, which are frequently in contact with each other, and meet at festivals, concerts and actions.

3. Key findings

3.1 How do young people inhabit, interpret and own their organisations?

This question allowed the exploration of organisational relationships such as: hierarchy and leadership; the emotions young people feel in the organisation; and public perception of movements and its activities. The synthesis of cases generated four concepts: 'sense of belonging'; 'unofficial leadership'; 'between a social movement and a political party'; and 'not that kind of extremists'.

3.1.1 'Sense of belonging'

This concept expresses the personal interactions between the participants in the movements, which can be articulated as a feeling of solidarity, belonging or friendship. The movements provide a space for communication and cooperation for the creation of tight and extensive social relations that the participants value. Sometimes the type of communication motivates young people's participation and becomes even more valuable than ideological stances. Thus, a certain type of communication inside their groups, friendship and the opportunity to express yourself and feeling of belonging to community appears to be extremely important for young activists:

I think, friendship is enormously relevant because the friends I met in the stadium they are real friends not just acquaintances. That affected me a lot. [...] Together you learn to achieve things. (Udo, UFS, eastern Germany)

The analytical category uniting the cases in this cluster might be that of 'solidarity', which is used for:

the description of different types of youth organisations characterised by a range of distinctive – gender, style, subcultural - dimensions. Formations of solidarity can embrace different youth groups both off- and online, can be real or imagined, temporary or enduring, include many subcultures or not relate to subculture at all. Most important for this type of identity is the lifestyle of its practitioners (including consumption habits, but not reduced to them), and also an agreed-upon conception of their antithesis (Omel'chenko and Sabirova 2011: 13).

The term 'solidarity' is relevant not only as an analytic category, but is encountered as a basic term in respondents' vocabulary, used to underline the communion of interests, mutual aid, close social ties between members of groups. The term 'solidarity' is reflected in slogans and logos; in names of labour unions, leftist organisations and movements; on the pictures of a clenched fist, which became an international symbol of solidarity. Being 'solidary' means being different, but united: 'It's like we're all friends, I would say. [...] It's just a pillar on which you can rely, and with whom you can talk about things' (Anna, CSN/UFS, eastern Germany).

A vivid example of solidarity in action is found among the punk and anarchist movements/(sub)cultures. The opportunities for social interaction and the specific communication among its members create the conditions for forming not only a symbolic solidarity, but a real solidarity in many towns where anarcho- and punk-scenes exist.

In a number of cases the feeling of solidarity grows into close personal bonds established between activists. Tight connections that develop within the movement create the atmosphere of certainty and solidarity necessary for feeling secure during the implementation of plans and initiatives:

You end up having a relationship with your militant companions that can turn into friendship. I think that is very positive for an organisation, because if you don't feel like a companion is your friend, you might not defend him at a given moment like you should. (Manel, ARRAN/CUP, Spain)

Being acknowledged by the group also promotes the further development of activist careers. In formal organisations membership may be accompanied by official procedures and allow access to certain benefits. For example, after the General Assembly of UFS approves a new member, (s)he gets access to the internet forum and exclusive right to wear a scarf or T-shirt with the group's emblem.

In less formal movements acknowledgement is expressed in the shape of a vast number of friends and social contacts, which guarantee access to different resources of the group. In the case of anarchists and punks this allows access to information, festivals, concerts, workshops, places to stay, projects, the use of other activists' property (flats, tents, cars), and support in difficult situations, etc.

3.1.2 'Unofficial leadership'

Abolishing any forms of inequality and hierarchy is one of the basic anticapitalist principles and results in rather specific leftist organisational forms. The concept of 'unofficial leadership' refers to the absence of any formal leader and official hierarchy alongside the adherence to principles of horizontal organisation, direct democracy and a type of hierarchy based on longevity and intensity of activist experience. As David Harvey notes:

The left as a whole is bedeviled by an all-consuming 'fetishism of organisational form:' The traditional left (communist and socialist in orientation) typically espoused and defended some version of democratic centralism (in political parties, trade unions, and the like). Now, however, principles are frequently advanced-such as 'horizontality' and 'non-hierarchy' - or visions of radical democracy and the governance of the commons, that can work for small groups [...] (Harvey 2012: 125)

As noted in the introduction, the cases included in this cluster take a range of different leftist organisational forms. The most institutionalised cases have formal structures, such as parties (CUP, Pirate Party, the blockade). A second group takes more fluid organisational forms, which include some institutionalised elements such as a name, sponsorship, etc. (The Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans, ARRAN). The third group consists of cases that can hardly be explored in terms of 'organisation' as they have a loose structure, which is better described as scene, movement or (sub)culture (punks, anarchists).

Despite these differences, the idea of 'unofficial leadership' is found in all movements and organisations analysed in this cluster. Hierarchy is not determined by formal status; it is present implicitly as a structure of relationships between organisers, activists, occasional participants and sympathisers. The intensity and duration of participation, enthusiasm and responsibility and respect from other members develops into the establishment of symbolic hierarchies. The development of one's career and good reputation inside the movement allows one to achieve a certain status which brings various benefits: the ability to 'direct the attitudes of others' (Anti-Dis AG), gain cultural and social capital (Anarchists), or become the activist whose opinion and willingness 'end up having more weight than others' (ARRAN/CUP).

At the same time, this kind of status-lead leadership acts behind the scenes and therefore can be veiled, non-transparent, very unstable, flexible and open to criticism. Many respondents say that they are not aware of any hierarchy or leadership in their

movement and feel everybody has equal opportunities to make suggestions, act and express opinions (Pirate Party, Anarchists, Antifascist punk activism):

It is like your own civil activism. If you have a good idea it is enough that you let it be known in the community and whoever is interested will run with it. Usually. It is not complicated. There is always someone who is ready to go along with it. (Martin, Pirate Party, Estonia)

The maintenance of equality in grass-roots organisations is achieved by applying the principles of direct democracy, the main instrument of which is consensus. Direct democracy 'is a system in which all (the most important) decisions are made in an absolutely democratic manner' (The Occupation Cookbook: 23), and all participants are engaged in the process of decision-making. That makes the structure of movements comparatively decentralised (as per the unofficial leadership model).

An example of direct democracy in action are plenums – regular meetings open for all interested participants of a movement or organisation, - which aim to reach a consensus on important decisions. Plenums were the central organ of decision making during such events as the blockade of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in 2009 and Occupy (in different locations). Arran, CUP, Ultra Football Supporters and Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans also conduct plenums where future actions are discussed, but the 'unofficial leaders' (ultras) formulate the agenda and set priorities. A participant of 'the blockade', Mila, notes that direct democracy is seen as an effective method of coordination and decision making in relatively large groups:

The direct-democratic moment was the only thing that could at that time mobilise such a large number of people.' (Mila, Blokade, Croatia).

Nevertheless, plenums are not the only possible ways to make a decision and are more widespread in movements where participants are not closely related to each other. Other cases, such as Anarchists or the Antifascist punk scene, however, are constituted in networks of close friends. This type of organisation is sometimes described as affinity groups; a term which is closely associated with left organisations and which describes groups 'of friends, sufficiently familiar with each other's strengths, weakness and lives, who have established a common language and who aim to achieve one or more goals, [...] grounded in common interests and trust in each other' (Gelderloos 2010: 11). In the Russian context this is very similar to the meaning of the term *tusovka*³.

Absolutely not. Everyone is kind of decentralised. There is no core. Well if someone carries something out, then one person first proposes it, then others discuss it, and if they agree to do this, they hold this or that action. (Mstislav, Anarchists, Russia)

Even in the cases that take institutionalised forms – parties (PP, CUP) or official organisations that are subjected to external supervision (Anti-Dis) - young people break down the rigid system of subordination and rearrange the organisational structure to make

³ 'This notion expresses the urban specificity of the *tusovka* apparent in its peculiar integration of people and space. [...] Hence *tusovka* indicates both the place people get together [...] and the group of people involved. These two meanings are knitted together in definitions of *tusovka* which focus on the act of getting together or gathering. The implication here is that the *tusovka* is not the site of goal-oriented activity – [...] it is the outwardly visible result of a process of getting and being together' (Pilkington 1994: 172).

it more decentralised, participatory and horizontal. The only refutational case here is EIK, which has a leader who 'is known for his authoritarian and conflict-prone leadership' (Vihma 2014). Both PP and EIK leaders gained their distinctive status after anti-ACTA protests in 2012 due to their 'organisational skills' and received media-attention. Nevertheless, Peeter Vihma (ibid.) notes that PP 'stands for positive freedoms; for them the Internet should facilitate making politics better through software programmes that enable more direct democracy, open discussions, and horizontal, non-hierarchical relations'.

3.1.3 'Between a social movement and a political party'

Participants in urban anticapitalist movements have to negotiate with the everyday manifestations of capitalism. While some of them try to distance themselves from monetary relations and institutional ties, others adopt capitalistic rules. Young people claim that they want to distance themselves from mainstream politics (PP) and see themselves as self-organised groups of young people (Anti-Dis AG, AGF). At the same time, they have to cover expenses incurred, as their activities require space, time and materials (for painting, printing, etc.), and this often requires engagement with formal structures.

For example, the cases of PP/EIK and Anti-Dis AG gain financial and administrative support from external structures. Members of the PP have organised at least two 'crypto-parties' in Tartu (each attended by around 40 people), which were financed by the city council's youth department, while EIK has the status of representative chapter of the International Internet Society (ISOC). Young football fans from Anti-Dis AG are reliant on financing by the Fan Project, which was launched in 1981 as the first fan work initiative in Germany. Similar to the AntiDis AG, the AGF is not totally independent, as a meeting place can generally only be provided by a (state-financed) supervisor. Anti-Dis also raises money by selling its scarves in the official fan shop: 'Of course, we are living in a capitalist society. Everyone has to acquire money to survive' (Fred, AntiDis, western Germany).

Institutional connections remain a recurrent topic of debate among activists. As one of the CUP members notes, they try to strike a balance 'between a social movement and a political party'. Moreover, formal organisations (PP, EIK, CUP) emphasise that they are not political parties in the common sense of the term due to the specifics of their form and content. The external representations of these organisations also do not correspond with the common notion of political parties:

Yeah well, we are seen something like a ghetto, as an urban tribe and such. And yes there are some stigmas [...] my grandmother, who is from L'Hospitalet, came home today and while shopping she saw a couple of guys from the CUP. She said she didn't know who they were but wore hair rasps, which I guess means dreadlocks, but they all go around looking the same, with rasps, with torn pants, and I don't know what [...] It's a stigma that they have. And she told me, 'If you were not so dirty, you would probably get more votes'. I do not know if we are filthy or not, but in any case it is a stigma that I think is out there. (Damià, Arran/CUP, Spain)

3.1.4 'Not that kind of extremists'

The concept 'not that kind of extremists' explores the desire of young activists to articulate the difference between themselves and right-wing activists. This clear identification of an 'other' meets one of the elements of definition of 'solidarity' above. Public opinion appears to be the rationale for this strategy as, according to respondents, public discourses are insensitive to differences between different forms of youth political activism. The term 'extremist' is applied both to the Left and the Right, forming an external perception of the two as a single whole. That conflicts with the participants' understanding of the Right as their main enemies (or opponents).

Moreover, the term 'extremist' acquires particularly negative connotations in some cultural contexts. A vivid example of this is Russia where, according to governmental discourse, anarchists are dangerous and extremist young people. For example, 'Center E', which is the counter-extremism department of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Russia, has a negative reputation among activists. They suppose that 'Center E' performs functions of a political police and prosecutes law-abiding oppositionists and social activists:

I mean, especially there is 'Center E' - the anti-extremism center. That is, they are very interested in everything, and, in fact, it is sometimes even frightening, like, how much they know about people who basically, like, haven't appeared anywhere really. Yet they know, like, to the point, like, what is your favorite dish, and so on... Like, say, well, once I was on my way to work [...] I mean, I don't always go to work at the same time. [...] And one day I was in the subway, and a worker...workers of 'Center E' came to me near the metro [...] and, well, asked questions. (Lena, Anarchists, Russia)

In this context the term 'extremist' denotes the delinquency of the leftist activists who pose a threat to national security, government, social order, etc. Therefore, young people try to distance themselves from the negatively charged category 'extremist' and find other terms for self-determination that break free from the image of violent and dangerous radicals who commit a breach of the peace (Anarchists, ARRAN/CUP). Activists are highly concerned also about the careful use of terms 'left extremism' and 'right extremism' and remonstrate against the equation of Left-wing with Right-wing youth in public opinion and the media (Anti Dis):

From the outside many times when you tell someone you're a member of these organisations and all that, they think that you're very radical, violent, a criminal or the like. When you're a part of this is, when you see that this is really not so. I admit that when I was on the outside I as well thought as many people here do, but once you enter, you see that in reality it is not so. The people there are not violent, nor [...] They're normal people. People are given to understand that the people who do these things have to be violent because society does not understand them and on the TV when there is a demonstration and there is a mess they blame the same ones and then people have this image of militants and all that. (Toni, ARRAN/CUP, Spain)

Illegal and radical activities on the part of left-wing activists appear to be the reason for the public perception of them as extremists. However, left-wing activists blame it on the misunderstanding of the nature of rebellion and seek to emphasise the coherence of their radical activities:

Especially at school we have a lot of people who – according to the [scientific] model of extremism – form the middle strata of society. [They] just don't care about anything, [have] no desire to deal with anything, like: 'I don't want to talk about it, oh stop going on, you are just a leftist revolutionary guy anyway'. A lot of things are just easily dismissed without thinking about it or dealing with it. Because a lot of topics arising at school are just quite complex and there is a lack of motivation to deal with it. (Edward, AGF, western Germany)

The EIK/PP and CSN are refutational cases here, in the sense that their public image is quite positive and not as controversial as that of other groups in the cluster. The EIK organisation was even granted the official 'NGO of the year' award. As Peeter Vihma notes, the views of EIK in terms of Internet use are consistent with general liberal democracy. Despite the fact that in the public perception PP has a more controversial, or even scandalous, reputation, it remains quite moderate. As one of the PP members notes, concerning an incident when one of the members (Mihkel) during his attendance at the annual Independence Day reception of the President of the Republic wearing a shirt reflecting protest against the powers of the elite and refusing to shake hands with the First Lady at the official ceremony: 'We have many opinions of Mihkel's actions on the board and we have to show ourselves to be a balanced political organisation'. Civil Society Network also has a good reputation, as it has close connections with politicians, local government, the church, educational institutions, business, the media etc.

3.2 How do young people understand and experience their own activism?

This section explores the forms and meanings of young people's activism. The synthesis revealed 3 concepts: 'knowledge is not a commodity'; 'leaving a message'; and 'violence as reaction, not as an attack'. Table 3.1 summarises the forms of activism relevant to each case study.

Table 3.1

| Forms of activism | Anarchists | Anti Dis | Antifa Punk Activism | Arran/CUP | CSN | UFS | Blockade | PP/EIK |
|--|------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|-----|-----|----------|--------|
| Formal politics | | | | √ (CUP) | | | | √ (PP) |
| Dissemination of ideas (piracy, distros, leaflets, plenums, workshops, etc.) | √ | | √ | √ | | | √ | √ |
| Demonstrations | √ | | √ | √ | √ | | | √ |
| Commemoration events | √ | | | √ | | | | |
| Direct action | √ | | √ | √ | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Violence, fighting | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | | |
| Lifestyle-based resistance | √ | | √ | √ | | | | |
| Symbolic activism (slogans, banners, flags, logos, symbols) | √ | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | |
| Charity work, volunteering, social support actions | √ | | | | | | | |

3.2.1 'Knowledge is not a commodity'.

Knowledge is a key issue for participants in several of the case studies, including PP/EIK and the Blockade. Free access to information, knowledge and education is a key dimension of this debate. Liberation of knowledge is seen as a basic prerequisite for democracy. The concept refers to one of the slogans of the Blockade, - 'knowledge is not a commodity', - which corresponds with radical pedagogy and libertarian critics of educational institutions (Van Dijk 1996; Lichtenstein 1985; Neill 1944; Tager 1986). The formal educational system in this context is interpreted as repressive, unifying, disciplining and insensitive to differences.

The concept 'knowledge is not a commodity' can be understood in different ways. For the members of the Blockade of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences this slogan meant providing access to education through the abolition of tuition fees in higher education. The general aim was much wider, however. The accessibility of education is interpreted as: central to ensuring equal life chances for people with different social backgrounds; an investment in the future; and the starting point for thinking about the current political, economic and social context more widely.

It was clear to me from the outset that we can't speak of a society where the free market was the highest ideal, it was obvious that we couldn't defend it when we were advocating for publicly funded education without asking ourselves the question of how the general political-economic foundations of society were formed. I don't know how we could separate it, not to think about public healthcare, and speak of public education, I mean, it was pretty obvious. (Zoki, Blokade, Croatia)

Anti-capitalists are in opposition to the dominant capitalist system and therefore seek authentic knowledge system and a mechanism for its practical enactment through a kind of informal educational system. The concept of 'lifelong learning' presumes that an individual keeps learning throughout their life, and marks out three educational trajectories: formal (schools, universities); non-formal (courses); and informal education. Informal education is a specific process of knowledge accumulation, learning skills and values through everyday communication with individuals in their social environment – family, friends, and acquaintances. Involvement of individuals in such educational practices results in changing their understanding of the world and reorganisation of life strategies and daily practices. Informal education is a voluntary educational choice where the process of knowledge

production is not monopolised by experts in the area. Concerning the concept of lifelong learning, we can conclude that the respondents from all synthesised cases highly rate the value of knowledge (both formal and informal):

I think that a lot of people just do not internalise self-learning, to undertake further training, the philosophy of life-long learning [...] but at a certain point in life they just think 'That's enough'. And I think this is the wrong way, especially in our current society. (Fred, AntiDis, western Germany)

Social space for informal education includes the dissemination of core values via the everyday communication of individuals, distribution of information, and experience of living together and physical involvement in group practices (actions, seminars, outdoor events, schools and festivals). Involvement of individuals in such educational practices results in changing their understanding of the world, reorganisation of life strategies and daily practices, acquiring necessary knowledge and skills (e.g. how to dance pogo and mosh, cook vegetarian meals, hitchhike on highways, etc.):

Let's see, normally, I always thought it was some skill to do things, like, making a banner, organising a concert or a lecture, things like that [...] that in school, in formal education they don't teach you to do and that I have learnt from Maulets [former name of Arran]. Also, speaking in public and all kinds of things that I think are very good to learn [...]. And also, with time, I think there is something that perhaps is not valued enough, which is that all of this implies working in a group, right? All that is the whole issue of conflict resolution, to know how to cope with them calmly, to have empathy with another person [...] and everything that comes within conflict resolution, reaching agreements [...] and I think it's important, right? (Marcel, ARRAN/CUP, Spain)

The process of globalisation also plays a role in the process of knowledge dissemination, including among new youth (sub)cultures and movements who follow transcultural anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, anarchist debates. As one of the Russian punk collectives notes, with the help of accessible literature from Europe, they 'grasped the meaning of words that used to be suspicious and obscure –DIY, squat, sXe1 :(, zine, vegan, sexism, ageism, distro, RASH, hardcore etc.' (Pank Vozrozhdeniye n.d.).

The dissemination of information and knowledge is implemented via different channels: distribution networks (distros); Internet spaces; infoshops; and public discussions. The Internet becomes the main medium for knowledge sharing, but sometimes it faces critique from activists, who seek offline communication:

A place for communication? Unfortunately, it's the internet these days. This spoils everything. [...] And today for some reason the information which we used to get directly from particular people in communication [...] You just easily type the letters – and done, you get a 'ready-to-cook' protest, as I said before. 'This is good, and this is bad'; 'being vegan is good, being a cop is bad'. [...] You just download books, read them and that's it. It is far easier to get this information today, but when you absorb it so quickly, you do not have time to assimilate it properly – that's a big problem. (Karina, Anarchists, Russia)

At the same time, the liberation of knowledge from tuition and ownership is treated as one of the basic prerequisites for free society. The idea of piracy is reflected in EIK, PP,

Anarchists and Antifa punk cases, which aim to advance the idea of anticopyright as the abolition of intellectual property. As usual, the texts are printed and distributed on the grounds of Creative Commons, which ‘allows others to alter, amend and develop the work on a non-commercial basis as long as they mention the author’ (Gelderloos 2012: 1). Or, in more radical form, on the grounds of Anti-copyright license, which can look close to this notion: ‘Anticopyright 2003. Everything in this publication is available for noncommercial use: reproduce, copy, borrow, detour, plagiarize, or steal any images, ideas or text for your own use’ (The Curious George Brigade 2003: 2).

3.2.2 ‘Leaving a message’

The concept ‘leaving a message’ is not a quotation from an interview but rather a metaphor that combines several meanings. On the one hand, it refers to one of the popular forms of activism – graffiti actions - while, on the other, it reveals the symbolic protest of some everyday practices of respondents, the aim of which is not to conduct an action per se, but to ‘leave a message’ (i.e. to demonstrate their civic/ political/ activist position).

One of the possible categories that could be useful for describing various forms of anticapitalist resistance, which respondents integrate in their everyday lives, is ‘revolution of everyday life’, ‘lifestyle-based resistance’ or ‘everyday resistance’. These terms are quite close to the notion of sub-activism which includes such activities as private and semi-private discussions and online piracy (Hagopian 1978; Bakardjieva 2009) and which we can see in the case of PP/EIK. In his book ‘The revolution of everyday life’ Raul Vaneigem says:

[p]eople who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints - such people have corpses in their mouths. (Vaneigem 2003: 26)

The reciprocal cases for this concept are primarily the non-institutionalised ones, as they seek the resources for creating a large-scale platform for their political statements. Therefore, they voice their protest via symbolic representations of protest rather than via activities that result in real social, political and economic changes. The repertoires of practices within the concept of ‘lifestyle-based resistance’ include DIY practices, boycotting, hitch-hiking, graffiti actions, stylistic performances, shoplifting, and other ‘disobedient’ daily routines, like deconstruction and ‘repair’ of un-reflexive displays of discrimination (Anarchists, Anti-Dis):

Anarcho-feminist activities are, first of all, sort of a daily routine for me, I mean, the kind of activities when I deconstruct each action regarding relations of authority. And especially those aspects that concern some patriarchal relations and the definitions of ‘me’ as [equal to] my gender identity. [...] The way I look [...], the way I behave, whether I engage in relationships, sexual relationships, and the way I communicate with the opposite sex, the way I interact with my parents, with my bosses. I mean the way I perceive all this. (Evgeniya, Anarchists, Russia)

As long as capitalism is the main target of respondents’ criticism, anti-consumer practices, understood as ways to escape ‘capitalist traps’, become essential for activists. The issue concerns the attempt to avoid the consumption of ‘unethical’ (in terms of treatment of

human and natural resources) production and to distance oneself from monetary consumption. These practices can be also called post-consumerist, because the idea is to shift from hedonistic (aimed at pleasure connected with self-care) consumption to politicised consumption (defined by ideological course and cultural environment).

What is understood as 'unethical' varies depending on national context and the movement's agenda. Boycotting is interpreted as an important form of engagement in many synthesised cases (ARRAN/CUP, Anti-Dis. Anarchists, Antifascist punk activism):

See, now when we are on the topic of Palestine, we mostly talk about boycotting Israeli products and stuff. And now because it is something that you pay attention to, right? Until this point you haven't done anything, and then you say, look, this way I can accomplish something, incorporate this into my life, because it costs me nothing and I'm doing something, I'm fighting for something in which I believe. (Raquel, Arran/CUP, Spain)

The list of banned products may include: products of animal origin (meat, milk, fur, eggs), pollution-causing vehicles and commodities (cars, plastic bags); products of transnational corporations (McDonald's, Nike, Adidas) as they 'use the labour of little Vietnamese girls' (Lena, Anarchists, Russia); brands which sympathise with right-wing ideologies (the drug-store chain Müller, the juice brand Becker's Bester, Birkenstock shoes) brands that discriminate against people through lookism (Abercrombie & Fitch), etc.

This is the good thing about capitalism: through your own choice of what things you buy you can influence things. (Phillip, AntiDis, western Germany)

I am a vegetarian [...] for political reasons [...] I know many people who support this kind of boycott. (Jan, AGF, western Germany)

The reasoning behind the consumption patterns includes ideas of justice and social equality and becomes a routine part of daily life for many activists. These practices can be either moderate in form and easy-to-follow or require determination and resolution like freeganism (Anarchists). Freeganism is an anti-consumption strategy that supposes consuming only the products that can be found for free. Freegans usually practice dumpster-diving to get food and goods that have been discarded as rubbish because of minor defects (like torn packaging, proximity to expiration date or wrong invoice).

The concept 'leaving a message' also includes various scenarios of aestheticisation/theatricalisation of public actions and practices of engagement with urban spaces. These can be mass processions, art performances, short and memorable rallies that last a few minutes, graffiti-actions, banners and stickers, which usually contain some political, social or ironic message. Many activists appear to be 'well acquainted with the spray' (Kejt, Antifascist punk activism, Croatia):

In the region we were [...] painting murals, many times pasting posters and so on. In fact this is what I like the most. I do not get tired of going to paste posters. (Stephen, Arran/CUP, Spain)

The concept 'leaving a message' in one way or another is reciprocal to all of the synthesized cases. While some express themselves in everyday life, others make their political declarations visible via massive demonstrations. Novices usually express strong emotions while talking about participation in demos, while the most experienced ones consider it

routine. However, some activists go beyond symbolic resistance and engage in radical forms of activism.

3.2.3 'Violence as a reaction, not as an attack'.

This concept is drawn from the statement of one of the respondents, who considers the antifascist violence against Nazis as 'a reaction, not an attack' (Purger, Antifa punk, Croatia). Adaptation of violent and illegal forms of activism, such as confrontation with police and Nazis, shoplifting and direct actions, are understood not as individual will but as a form of fighting back against capitalist and fascist aggression.

Fights with right-wing activists are common practice in a number of movements which adopt a strong antifascist agenda (Anti-Dis, Antifascist punk activism, UFS, Anarchists). Some respondents regard radical actions as the only possible way to deal with Nazis, capitalists/bourgeoisie while others reject any forms of violence as it is wrong and itself a 'fascistic method' (Lena, Anarchists, Russia) of interaction. Those on both sides agree, however, on the roots of confrontations as a necessary means of self-defence from nationalist aggression responding to violence with violence. The lack of dialogue between right-wing and left-wing youth sometimes can lead to injuries and even to the death of activists:

But, like, such situations, when there was a fight, no one there thought about talking, it was deliberate violence. Like, you see, it's the Nazis, you can talk with them only in the form of a fight. Like this. The point of this is just to show them, probably, well, show them through force, that they are wrong in their beliefs and attitudes. That is, the use of such violence, whether it is good or bad - it is difficult to say. Maybe it's good in one sense, but in another sense it may be bad. Dialogue and verbal communication do not always work. (Tolik, Anarchists, Russia)

Not only Nazis become the object of antifascist and anticapitalist responsive violence. The most noticeable, shocking, provocative form of expressing opposition to capitalists, government and its institutions is direct action. Direct action is illegal, radical activity that leads to certain tangible outcomes (like tampering with or destruction of property). Direct action is associated with significant risks and usually put into practice by a small group of friends (3-4 people) and is kept a secret. The reasoning behind those actions is similar to that behind reactive responses to 'capitalist fascism' (Purger, Antifa punk, Croatia):

We live in a world built with methods that are indirectly violent [...] from banks to some Todorčić' legacy around the city [...] I think this violent method can be directed so as not to harm anyone except the explicit elite directly, let's put it like that, the political or economic elite that did that. [...] I will always be for non-violent action, but if the water is up to my neck and I don't see any other way, then honestly, why not? (Kejt, Antifa punk, Croatia)

Other widespread illegal actions against capitalists are shoplifting and squatting; two forms of non-monetary consumption interpreted as 'restitution' or 'liberation' of (working class) people's goods which were misappropriated by capitalists (see also Section 3.5.1):

Even if I had money I would do that because I think why, damn it, is food a privilege and not a right? While food must be a right, first of all, not a privilege. The same thing with accommodation, any person must have his own accommodation, it doesn't matter what country he lives and where he lives. But the political situation is such that not everyone has their own house, not everyone has enough money for food, that's why I practice such things as taking food, the 'liberation' of food from shops [shoplifting] because it is a goddammit right of every person. [...] I just want to say that robbing the rich is not fucking bad, but if you rob someone like you, yeah, it is fucking awful. (Kirill, Anarchists, Russia)

3.3 What are young activists' perceptions of politics/the political?

This section explores activists' understanding of 'politics' and 'the political'. Two concepts were generated during synthesis of the data: 'wrong democracy' and 'ready to take sides'.

3.3.1 'Wrong democracy'.

The concept 'wrong democracy' expresses the main attitude towards the democratic system among the respondents. The concept combines an acceptance of democracy as the best system available with disenchantment with its current implementation. The acceptance of democracy as such is not contested in most of the cases. At the same time, however, most of the participants believe that democracy is not being practiced in an optimal way; it is incomplete and illusive. Young people criticise the way democracy functions and deny that current political system can be described as democratic (Anarchists, Anti Dis, Arran/CUP).

Democracy is [...] it works that way, but it works, we should not tell lies. And at least democracy is a space that allows us to help our movement exist. It doesn't give us a thousand facilities in the world, but we can exist, where a dictatorship would not allow us to exist. We must use this system to make it into our own [...] Democracy is our route to power. (Lluc, Arran/CUP, Spain)

A pseudo-democracy is more convenient now, when everyone governs using money. At present this way is the most likely for everybody. (Dima, Anarchists, Russia)

The national context leaves its trace on young people's evaluation of the level of democratisation of their countries. For instance, while some respondents from Germany claim that it 'is 90 percent a democratic country' (Tom, AntiDis, western Germany), Russian anarchists claim that 'we have, by the way, a fascist country now, an awfully crude dictator' (Dima, Anarchists, Russia).

Many respondents say that they live in a pseudo-democratic society or that democracy in their country 'could be better' (Tom, AntiDis, western Germany). Young people offer various concepts of 'ideal' democracy, such as 'liquid democracy', 'direct democracy', 'grassroots democracy' or 'participatory democracy', which would be more transparent, adaptable and decentralised:

It is also a society where decisions are taken not from the top to the bottom but from the bottom to the top. (Marc, Arran/CUP, Spain)

The Pirate Party and EIK lobby for the liberalisation of Internet spaces and promote the use of IT solutions in advancing democracy; they view democracy as a software project or propose other ways of managing democratic procedures through the internet. One of the ideas developed by PP members is an open source computer software project. This means that anyone can take the source code and develop it and the results are judged based on how well they work. The logic of mutual development of some projects corresponds with their understanding of direct democracy:

I imagine the governing of the state as happening in the same way as software projects, sort of a meritocracy. Everything is public, which means that everyone can take the same code and make something out of it, which provides for meritocracy, so that everyone [...] can get access to power. (Mikk, Pirate Party, Estonia)

This is in our programme, to develop the ideas of participatory politics. I think this is the most important thing. I think this kind of web architecture and more specific platforms could enable participatory democracy. I have always wanted to experiment with the boundaries of politics while they always think of old ways and bureaucracies to control it. (Eduard, Pirate Party, Estonia)

Current political regimes are described as false democracies that lack direct engagement of citizens and are ruled by politicians who fail to keep their promises. Pirate parties appear to be the ones who gain trust (Anarchists, PP, Anti-Dis), while others are mostly criticised for manipulating public opinion, obsession with making money and gaining power:

And finally you understand some things, like that the entire narrative about the nation and all that, the self-deception is political. It serves a daily political purpose as well as to legitimise some daily-political decisions of the fucking social elite, be it political and economic or whatever. A justification of the status quo. (Jagi, Anti-fa punk, Croatia)

Therefore, democracy appears to be 'the best of the worst systems' (Edward, AntiDis, western Germany). Relatively few respondents propose fundamentally different political regimes, like socialism or anarchism. Such systems are perceived more like a utopia:

Now I look at it somewhat more soberly, and it seems to me that it is, in fact, impossible. It is quite remarkable as an idea, on a piece of paper, as something which we can strive for. That is, it's the fairest one, yes, but it will probably never happen. (Ira, Anarchists, Russia)

It is important to note, though, that the cases are not entirely homogeneous in terms of perceptions of politics and the political. Thus, there are activists who do not accept democracy and insisted that a desirable political structure, other than democracy (anarchism, socialism, communism) is achievable if only on a small scale right now:

If it were impossible, I would not be doing this, though [...] Yes, I believe it is achievable, but now I only see it on a small scale, even St Petersburg is too large a scale. (Kristina, Anarchists, Russia)

3.3.2 'Ready to take sides': differentiating between apolitical and anti-political

The term 'grey zone' (or the *political elsewhere* (Cappelli 2010)) is a concept that is interpreted by respondents as a sphere of apolitical 'undecideds' located inbetween the right and the left political 'extremes'. One of the respondents describes them as people, who 'need to distance themselves in their four walls: be good with everyone'. He also mentions that 'they are not ready to take sides' (Max, Anti-fascist punk, Croatia). This characteristic is usually ascribed by activists to the majority of people, who are not engaged in any forms of political activity. The concept of a 'grey zone' can be articulated in different ways. For example, Russian anarchists prefer to use words such as '*terpila*' (person who would tolerate anything) or '*obyvala*' (person of narrow interests) to describe the apolitical mainstream. Apolitical attitudes are thus disapproved by young activists:

Well it's just stupid to communicate with people, because they won't even listen to you, they are not interested. 'So, politics...' – and no one will communicate with you, it doesn't matter how interestingly you speak, they just have a stereotypical opinion of people who conduct political activities, they put an end to these things. (Alexey, Anarchists, Russia)

Therefore, the concept 'ready to take sides' is a subversion of Max's statement. It implicates willingness among left-wing activists to articulate and put into practice an unequivocal political position. Respondents oppose themselves to 'average people' from a 'grey zone', who are afraid of making decisions and therefore remain in the field of populist and mainstream politics. Activists characterise 'the middle' as unreflexive, ignorant, indifferent, indecisive, passive, disunited, apolitical and susceptible to populist and nationalist ideas:

Those who say 'extremism is not our thing, they are just a few people on the margins of society, we can deport them'. And this is actually the fascist thing about the [present] society. (Mark, AGF, western Germany)

I think that the problem in Europe in general is that apoliticism isn't apoliticism, but a tolerance for fascism. (Kova, Anti-fa punk, Croatia)

At the same time, young people who are objectively highly politically active, hesitate to claim that they are directly relevant to 'the political'. While some respondents identify themselves with a certain political identity (leftist, socialist, anarcho-communist, etc.), others take an apolitical (or anti-political) stand. In this context being apolitical doesn't mean being indifferent to politics. Indeed it is rather understood as an attempt to distance oneself from determinative political labels. This is particularly relevant to punks, antifascists and anarchists, who do not always locate themselves in the political sphere:

But often apolitical is, you know, if you are not with us, then you're against us. You can't be apolitical. If you don't want to declare yourself as a leftist, then you must be a rightist. But I think those are weak individuals; because they need to be in herds it is hard for them to perceive someone outside the herd, so they place you, if you are not in our herd, then you must be in another [...] People who don't understand themselves as individuals, won't understand others as individuals, they must put you in boxes, you can't be apolitical, you can't be special. (Johnny, Anti-fascist punk, Croatia)

Institutionalised forms of political and civic activities (voting, running for office, lobbying) are perceived critically by a large number of respondents, except for the ones who belong to political parties. Among the critical aspects of elections respondents mention the low representation of parties which represent their interests, exclusion of minority voices and their lack of real impact on political decisions. Therefore, some young people vote, while others either spoil the ballot or don't take part in elections at all:

At the moment I actually don't care who is sitting up there. They all just talk and talk about something and in the end they don't implement it anyway. Well, this is not what I like. So, I better get active myself. (Mark, AGF, western Germany)

An individual citizen has to vote and after that he has no voice for the next four years (Jan, AGF, western Germany)

In some instances, moreover, the 'readiness to take sides' can take on more sinister overtones, when it becomes a real fight on an ideological basis. While the traditional forms of political engagement remain undesirable for the respondents, the open declaration of their political views may appear to be hard to implement and dangerous. This is particularly the case when the threat of confrontation with the police and Nazis leads activists of some radical leftist movements (whose political activities are conducted outwith the law) to maintain a strong tradition of secrecy including the use of pseudonyms, covering their faces, wearing inconspicuous clothes at demonstrations and using secret channels to convey information regarding demonstrations and events in order not to be recognised as adherents of a certain political stance (Arran, Anarchists).

3.4 How are young people's activism, attitudes and everyday lives shaped by the past and the present?

This section explores the influence of history on the activism, everyday lives and attitudes of young activists. Two concepts were generated during synthesis of the data: 'looking back: the meaning of war'; and 'residing in the present: new generational symbols'.

3.4.1 Looking back: the meaning of war

Of all issues, wars and revolutions are the most mentioned historical events. Young people perceive it as an important experience for gaining a better insight into human nature and a point of departure for future development. History is seen as characterised by the constant repetition of similar plots, which can be overwritten if we learn the lessons history teaches:

None of us knows anything about it, because we found our own stories to tell, our own ideologies to fight for, and I think that the war has been a testing ground for discovering who and what people are. (Max, Antifascist punk, Croatia)

Well, yeah, historical memory is very important, because remembering the past is remembering how we got here [...] Why do we have to remember? Because now that Holocaust could take place in Palestine or it could happen right here, when an immigrant comes and just because he's from another country, there's Apartheid. (Lluc, Arran/CUP, Spain)

World War II is a source of materials for the formation of current identities for many young people, who acquire recollections about the war from their grandparents and teachers. However, the peculiarities of their apprehension of war may totally diverge from the generally accepted ones. For instance, the pride of victor countries is subjected to for criticism for the unwarrantable anaesthetization of war and solemn celebrations during Victory Day, which turns the commemoration of victims into a resource for national pride. For example, on Victory Day Russian anarchists have held an action called 'There are no winners' during which they hung up a banner with this slogan on one of the bridges to draw attention to the issue.

On the other hand, the German feeling of national 'guilt' over the National Socialist period is criticised by the members of Anti Dis, who think that this is a way of ignoring history and could lead to its repetition. The activists claim that average citizens of Germany of that period are depicted as victims, who are relieved of responsibility for their support of the Nazi regime. They also stand for prohibition of any kind of nationalism or national pride in Germany, call for a ban on watching national football matches and any other national symbols, such as flags, jumpers and scarves of the national team:

The role of the Wehrmacht is being transfigured especially in history programmes, and also the role of the German population at those times [...] following the slogan 'Grandpa was not that bad'. [...] Mostly, it was one of the high-ranking SS-officers who somehow was the guilty one. But the rest [of society] just gets away with it too well. This disturbs me very much. I don't want to deny that there were also people in Germany, among the rural population, who maybe did not notice it. But in the cities?! Nobody can tell me that nobody knew about where his neighbours suddenly disappeared. Well, I just cannot imagine that. I admit that one could have known about it and just said: 'I was afraid of opposing the regime'. This is one thing. But to claim vehemently not to know anything about it, 'I wash my hands of it', is another thing. (Simon, AntiDis, western Germany)

At the same time, they notice that Germany is 'trapped' in history, as 'it is kind of difficult, that people in many parts of the world think that in Germany there are only Nazis' (Peter, AntiDis, western Germany). The desire to 'repair' history is traced in narratives about both national and family history and sometimes appears as one of the motivations for current activism:

These are things you always hear [...] stories about things that happened to your family, and since they've always been on the side of the losers, you know, maybe those are things that give you even more reason to fight. (Raquel, Arran/CUP, Spain)

Other historical issues noted by respondents are revolutions, civil wars and protests of the recent past. In general, young people appear to be more sensitive to tragic historical events, like crises, wars, revolutions, etc. However, a number of respondents claim that they are not interested in history at all and that 'we need to think more about what is happening now and not about what is written in some history books' (Kirill, Anarchists, Russia).

3.4.2 Residing in the present: new generational symbols

Young people's perception of history should be understood as 'narrative' rather than 'fact' as it is selected, re-conceptualised and built into the history of their movements.

Respondents articulate moments linked to the history of the movement and try to reconstruct the essence of the movement via its past, even if that had been uneven and discontinuous:

Yes, it seems to me, there have always been anarchists. I mean, even at the time of the Great Ancient Roman Empire. It's just that in the past there was a different name, that's all. That's why for me, I think, the concept of anarchy, in general, comes from the origin of mankind, roughly speaking. (Pasha, Anarchists, Russia)

Indeed, the new history is being written right now, through the creation of new historical figures, generational symbols and commemoration days. In a global context, the contemporary period for 'the new left' starts in 1968 (Tsvetkov 2003: 27) with the opposition to consumer society, mass culture and conformity by a wide spectrum of ecological activists, squatters and DIY activists. It was at the end of twentieth century, however, that the intensive development of communication means and media-broadcasting led to 'the large-scale increase in diversity and acceleration of global cultural flows, higher intensity and speed of cultural exchange' (Pilkington and Bliudina 2004: 19). Thus, new left ideas are understood as having started to spread quite recently and as being still in the process of development and formation:

Really, when I go back 5 years, perhaps even more, there wasn't any group of people who would consistently be critical of the system from this leftist position. Or I think it was incomparably more weakly articulated and of course, what happens in all countries is, to some extent, a consequence of the crisis, but on the other hand, considerable effort was invested in all this, you know. (Vuk, Blockade, Croatia)

Alongside some common global ideas, like anti-capitalism or anti-fascism, the movements have definite local traits and histories. The leading role in the process of constitution of a movement's memory is assigned to commemoration of prominent activists. For example, for ARRAN/CUP activists one of the key figures is Guillem Agulló, the militant from Maulets who was murdered in Valencia by fascist militants at the age of 19 in 1993. In 2013 his death was marked by a 20th anniversary commemoration that included events and publication of materials. A similar position is occupied by Timur Kacharava, a young Russian punk musician and anti-fascist activist who was murdered by nationalists in the centre of Saint-Petersburg on 13 November 2005. To this day, his friends, comrades, and admirers gather near the site of his murder, carrying banners and flags, and offering flowers and photographs.

It's also motivational to see who you are, knowing that 20 years ago they killed someone who was involved in the same struggle as you are. That motivates you to keep fighting and to keep trying to change things. (Toni, Arran/CUP, Spain)

These are first-hand memories of young people involved in movements and concern tragic events that unite them. In this way memory campaigns and commemoration days - actions, dedicated to the memory of activists who have died for the cause - become important

symbols of activist solidarity and struggle. Such campaigns can include demos, graffiti actions and meetings. Moreover living activists – imprisoned or injured through activism – are also given symbolic importance through solidarity and support campaigns.

3.5 How do young people articulate, adopt and put into practice anticapitalist, anarchist and new left ideologies?

This section discusses three concepts which reveal the peculiarities of modes in which young people articulate, adopt and put into practice their ideas. These are: 'Abolish capitalism and discrimination'; 'Against nationalism'; and 'Lessons in deportment'. These concepts are metaphorical expressions or key concepts generated as a result of meta-ethnographic translation of one case into another.

3.5.1 'Abolish capitalism and discrimination'

The critique of capitalism per se is traced in cases 'Movement for free education', 'Anti-Discrimination Working Group of Football Fans', 'ARRAN/ CUP' and 'Anarchists'. We can also say that anti-capitalist discourse is implicitly present in the cases 'Anti-fascist punk activism' and 'Civil Society Network' where it is expressed in terms of solidarity with working class and DIY ethics. EIK and PP cases appear to be the missing cases, as anti-capitalist and anti-fascist problematics are totally absent from the narratives of respondents and the party's regulations. While 'Movement for free education' articulates the anticapitalist problematic in various forms, anti-discrimination issues are not so evident. For the rest of the movements fighting different forms of discrimination becomes the major issue of concern.

Anti-capitalism includes a wide variety of ideologies and concepts, which critique capitalism in diverse ways. The ultimate aim of anti-capitalist movements is the abolition of classes and any forms of discrimination caused by the hegemony of capitalism. Anti-capitalists offer an alternative perspective on economic and social systems: socialist, anarchist, libertarian, etc. As one of the anarchistic collectives notes in their book about the work:

[c]apitalism is a system in which private ownership of capital determines the social landscape; in a sense, it really is capital that calls the shots, ruling through interchangeable human hosts. [...] As long as the foundation of our economic system is ownership, capital will tend to accumulate into higher and higher concentrations, and the resulting inequalities will determine the dynamics of our society. (CrimethInc 2011: 52)

The logic of anti-capitalist critique is based on the notion that capitalism is the root of social inequality. Uneven distribution of wealth and resources leads to the situation when the working classes are subordinated by elites (capitalists, bourgeoisie), the gap between the quality of life of citizens of different countries grows and people and nature are exploited by transnational corporations. The capitalist system, therefore, satisfies the needs of political and business elites but does not work for society as a whole:

As for me capitalism could be compared with a machine that needs repairing every day, which doesn't operate, breaks all the time. [...] In normal society such fucking shit shouldn't take place, no war, no famine, no things which happen

under capitalism. And it shows us that it doesn't work. Or, to put it crudely, it works very badly. (Oleg, Anarchists, Russia)

One of the most radical critiques of capitalism is found in the 'Anarchists' case. A radical anarchist alternative to capitalism is close to the ideology of anarcho-primitivism with its critical approach towards modern society and its ideal of the 'organic', 'natural', pre-industrial state of things (Zerzan 1994; Zerzan et al. 2012). The most articulated form of such a social project is the practice of autonomous zones or eco-settlements in which anticapitalist ideas of equality, horizontal organisation, non-monetary consumption and ethical natural exchange can be brought to life through small scale production and isolation from the outside world:

It is important for me to be as little involved in the system as possible, I mean, to pay it [system] as less as possible at the same time. If you pay some money for products of transnational corporations whether it be 'Coca-Cola', 'McDonald's' or those manufacturers of iPhones, then you support them with your money and your participation. Yeah, it is not so significant that you bought a bottle of Coca-Cola, I mean, given the global scale of these corporations these peanuts are nothing. But anyway you made some contribution to that global slavery. (Kolya, Anarchists, Russia)

The implementation of such projects in an urban environment is almost impossible. Quite radical leftist positions understand the capitalist system as global slavery, un-reflexively supported by every consumer.

More moderate libertarian positions, accessible for urban youth, offer a wide repertoire of resistance: reducing one's consumption; boycotting products from unethical companies, etc. (see Section 3.2.3). Possibilities for free accommodation are provided by 'squatting', that is the unauthorised occupation of abandoned or unoccupied places. Squatting is to a large extent a symbolic demonstration of the anticapitalist position on property; a kind of protest against the irrational use of housing and the creation of a space of free action and communication (Arran/CUP, Antifa punk, Anarchists):

That's it, I am telling you, [name of the squat] whatever happens there, whatever there was, whatever there will be, like, that definitely is one unbelievably positive phase in every, in every, in the life of every person that was there even for a while [...] (Dorica, Antifa punk, Croatia)

An anticapitalist position takes a critical approach towards the money and institutions that account for the distribution of resources. However, living in capitalist societies without money is extremely difficult to achieve in practice. Consequently, even among its adherents, anticapitalism appears utopian. This is reflected in statements by some respondents who feel that their ideas and politics could not ever be implemented widely (Anarchists, PP). Although social equality is one of the most desired aims, respondents describe it as a dream or a fantasy that probably would never come true:

What interests me about the Pirate party is that it is like in a science fiction book [...] like a weird thing, things that are not too probable, old people look at it like it is a joke or something. I think it is like a fantasy for me. (Mihkel, PP, Estonia)

While some activists use various radical techniques of resistance to capitalism and discrimination, others try to adjust to circumstances. Thus, the perception of anti-capitalist

society as a utopia results in the gradual institutionalisation and commercialisation of some movements. At the same time, some people (e.g. in Anti Dis AG) are quite sceptical about the idea of abolishing capitalism:

Well, for me it is always interesting to talk about criticisms of capitalism. But I always think that it is utopian to think that capitalism could be abolished; this is not possible in our society. Well, there will never be a socialist world republic. (Jan, AGF, western Germany).

Struggling against fascism, racism, sexism, homophobia and other discriminatory phenomena often becomes an associated part of a wider anti-capitalist agenda. Some movements add to this agenda other forms of discriminatory practices, including anti-Semitism, anti-Roma sentiments, ableism and lookism. However, in contrast, discrimination, including fascism and racism, are not discussed in formal organisations such as PP/EIK and in the 'Movement for free education'.

3.5.2 'Against nationalism'

Confrontation with right-wing activists is the most important focus of anti-discrimination politics among anti-capitalists. Of all forms of discrimination the main leftist critique is directed towards those based on ethnicity: fascism, racism and xenophobia. For this reason right-wing activists are perceived as 'antagonists', 'enemies' or 'opponents'. Respondents use a number of names, such as neo-fascists, Nazis, racists or boneheads to describe these groups:

If we understand that we are one extreme, then obviously there are people in Mataro who are antagonistic towards us, not that they have made life impossible, but they have tried. (Quim, Arran/ CUP, Spain)

The Nazis handed out leaflets inside the stadium. And automatically, people came and kicked them out. [...] Well, it got out of hand and they were chased away pretty rudely. (Roger, CSN, Germany)

Young people join a symbolic and real struggle with right-wing activists. Alongside the fights, they blockade neo-Nazi events and distribute antifascist literature. This appears to be particularly important for non-institutionalised youth organisations. Antifascist football firms (Anti Dis, AGF, UFS, and, to a lesser extent, Anarchists and Antifascist punk activism) integrate left-wing activism into the space of stadia, which are traditionally associated with nationalist fan groups.

Anti-fascist attitudes are usually accompanied by anti-nationalist and anti-patriotic sentiments. The concept of 'nation', national and patriotic ideas are often perceived as a basis for xenophobic attitudes in society. In the opinion of informants, nationalist attitudes are fed by governments to create disciplined and predictable subjects (Anarchists, Anti Dis): 'In my opinion it is kind of racism [...] this patriotic and nationalist attitude is like a fertile soil for any racist' (Paul, AntiDis AGF, western Germany).

It is significant that concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' have a particular meaning for the Catalan left secessionist movement (to which Arran and CUP belong). They differentiate between Spanish nationalism (which is the oppressive side) and the Catalan (which represents a movement for emancipation). Thus, while Spanish nationalism is related with

right-wing essentialist ideology, members of Arran/CUP fight for an inclusive and not ethnic-based free “nation” (the Catalan Countries). The concept ‘against nationalism’ is reciprocal for all of the presented cases although, patriotism can be reinterpreted and find new expression as the feeling of belonging, sense of responsibility, citizenship and ‘local patriotism’:

Local patriotic thing, little bit more of that between people, but it doesn't have anything to do with right-wing attitudes. Like, I don't know, only local patriotic in a positive way, like I don't think as like [...] negatively to belittle someone else, but to love where I am. I don't know... like where you grew up, you love your street, you love your town. (Johnny, Antifa punk, Croatia)

Moreover, there are interesting connections between the two opposing factions: many antifascist slogans and symbols are similar to Nazi ones. For example, anarchists in Russia use the international slogan ‘Good night, white pride!’ which is consonant with the nationalist one: ‘Good night, left side!’ both verbally and graphically. Some cases also mention the transition of activists from movements on the Left to the Right (Anarchists) and situations of ‘flirting with right-wing audiences’ (Antifascist punk activism):

No, no, no he didn't know, but I don't know, someone filled his brain with stupid ideas. We said that he is reading, that he is following Blood and Honour and such stupid things where information, where disinformation, is being spread [...] (Sheena, Antifa punk, Croatia)

This provides an interesting insight into youth political and activist choices, which sometimes can be based on a sense of solidarity and belonging rather than on adherence to a certain political perspective. This becomes evident through the perspective of young people who experienced the transition from left-wing to right-wing activism and vice versa:

What I saw in fascism then, when I went to football matches, was that feeling of communion, but it was still an empty feeling that didn't fill anything, didn't create any real community; there was only hate towards the unknown and everything that was not Croatian. [...] I was really feeding on the feeling of belonging. (Murphy, Antifa punk, Croatia)

3.5.3 ‘Lessons in deportment’: political correctness to gender, class and ethnicity

Notwithstanding the proclaimed gender, class and ethnic equality, a critical approach towards the research of anticapitalist movements shows that in some cases this goes no further than common politeness. Many participants of those movements are not without some prejudices and sympathies. Leftist movements and scenes are concerned to provide a place that is ‘safe’ for people with different gender, sexual, ethnic experiences. But at the same time the minorities remain such in those movements; the vast majority of respondents had no first hand experience of discrimination. The movements mostly consist of heterosexual, cis-gender men, belonging to dominant ethnic and national groups.

The paradoxes of ‘real’ and ‘declared’ relations to minorities and different classes are striking in the cases of the ‘Anarchists’ and ‘Antifascist punk activism’, which emphasise the possibilities and limitations of young women's participation in activism of the radical left.

Although gender equality is proclaimed as one of the most important values of the groups, and one of its most distinctive traits, the deconstruction of gender issues shows that proclamations of antidiscrimination towards women in some cases remain little more than demonstrative in nature. Some anarcho-feminists have already given a name to this phenomenon; '*manarchism*'. Thus, although sexist discourse is condemned, a distinctive 'glass ceiling' to women's activist and subcultural careers is observable. As some female respondents note, instead of fighting the gender discrimination, participants disregard the differences. As Sabina noted about the reaction she received after writing a text about her own experience of being raped: 'they talked to me only because it was politically correct.' (Sabina, Antifa punk, Croatia).

Young women are likely to participate in demonstrations, actions and initiatives, but they rarely organise them. Even then they often remain unseen in the public sphere and tend to respond to actions concerned with safe activism like caring for animals, visiting orphanages, leading discussions, etc. Still, they take risks in shoplifting and sometimes join confrontations with the police and Nazis (though usually using pepper-spray projectiles rather than fists, knives or guns) or get arrested. But while the names of imprisoned or killed anarchists and antifascists are well-known and there are mass solidarity and memory campaigns in their honour (in Russia these include Timur Kacharava, Alexey Suguta and Ivan Khutorskoy), women are unlikely to be mentioned either in the context of talking about activism, or about the theory or history of left movements.

The visibility of women on punk scenes is also seen as an issue that must be addressed by some female punks. As an answer to sexism inside the scene, women (in both the Russian and Croatian cases) had formed anarcho-feminist groups, which discuss problems regarding sexism and try to overcome the situation by organising female punk bands, infoshops and publishing zines:

The reason I started playing was stupid; it was important for me to play as a girl on the scene, so I could be visible and so I could stimulate others or [...] let's say recruit, involve. (Sonja, Antifa punk, Croatia)

Unfortunately, in all cases except the 'Anarchists' and 'Antifascist punk activism' information about sexism is missing. Although, the peculiar properties of female activism seem to be a promising topic of further analysis and discussion. Another issue that was not discussed in the narratives of respondents was participation by ethnic minority members. However, even a superficial analysis of the ethnic composition of the groups shows that they are ethnically quite homogenous.

The flip side of such discrimination is the presence of certain sympathies towards the working class. Although respondents have diverse class backgrounds, some young people want to affiliate with the working (exploited) class, proudly stating their class identity and commitment to its culture (Antifascist punk activism, Anarchists). They want to 'embody' working class identity in order to explain their attitude to class warfare. In this context it is interesting to explore the experience of a Russian anarchist, who finds the hard labour of workers 'romantic' and 'cool':

I used to work at a factory, because I was somehow inspired by the idea that all this working class, you know, and we need to lift the country off its knees, read a lot of different books, leaflets, and decided to go to the factory. (...) Because I thought, that maybe I would find my vocation in the working class. That physical

labour and the rest seem to be so romantic, don't they? You know, when you read some literature, listen to some songs, you think – that's cool. (Karina, Anarchists, Russia)

Such romanticisation of hard labour can be interpreted in the context of the absence of personal, first-hand experience of working class lifestyle.

4. Conclusion

The report presents the findings of a meta-ethnographic synthesis of eight ethnographic case studies included in the cluster 'Anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-fascist movements'. The cluster contains a wide spectrum of political parties, solidarities, grassroots movements and organisations, whose ideologies and activities relate to the anti-capitalist and anti-discrimination agenda. At the same time, the political stances of the cases are also very diverse; from centre-leftists to separatists and ultra/radical/far left.

The key findings were organised around five questions, revealing 1) the way young people inhabit, interpret and own their organisations; 2) how they understand and experience their own activism; 3) their perceptions of politics/the political; 4) the ways young people's activism, attitudes and everyday lives shaped by the past and the present; and 5) how they articulate, adopt and put into practice anticapitalist, anarchist and new left ideologies.

The ultimate aim of anti-capitalist movements is the abolition of classes and any forms of discrimination which are caused by the hegemony of capitalism. The struggle against fascism, racism, sexism, homophobia and other discriminatory manifestations is frequently incorporated into the anti-capitalist agenda. Among all forms of discrimination the main leftist critique is addressed towards discrimination based on ethnicity: fascism, racism and xenophobia. Confrontation with right-wing activists is the most important focus of anti-discrimination politics of anti-capitalists. Notwithstanding the proclaimed gender, class and ethnic equality, a critical approach towards the research of anticapitalist movements shows that in some cases the commitment appears to run no deeper than common decency and many participants of these movements are not immune from prejudices and sympathies.

Organisational matters become the main issue of concern for leftist and anti-capitalist collectives, which seek horizontality in structure and use forms of decision making based on the principles of consensus and direct democracy. Anti-capitalist movements and organisations are primarily decentralised and could be described as characterised by 'unofficial leadership'. At the same time, the relationships between participants of the movements are articulated as a feeling of solidarity, belonging or friendship and appear to be extremely important for young activists.

Participants of the movements feel ready to take sides, articulate and put into practice their political views. Besides, they have their own critical reflections on the term 'political' when applied to their activities. While some respondents identify themselves with a certain political identity (leftist, socialist, anarcho-communist, etc.), others take an apolitical (or

anti-political) stance. In this context being apolitical does not mean being indifferent to politics, but should be rather understood as an attempt to distance oneself from determinative political labels.

An acceptance of democracy as the best system goes along with disenchantment with its realisation. Most of the participants believe also that democracy is not being practiced in an optimal way; it is incomplete and illusive. Young people criticise the way democracy functions and deny that their current national political system can be described as democracy. Therefore, institutionalised forms of political and civic activities (voting, running for office, lobbying) are apprehended critically by a large number of respondents, except for the ones who belong to political parties.

Some young people demonstrate their civic/ political/ activist position by expressing themselves in everyday life practices (boycotting, non-monetary consumption, veganism, etc.), while others make their political declarations visible via massive demonstrations and direct actions. At the same time adaptation of violent and illegal forms of activism (including confrontation with police and Nazis) are interpreted as a form of fighting back the capitalist and fascist aggression. Therefore, respondents are highly concerned about the public perception of them as 'extremists' and criticise insensitivity to differences between left-wing and right-wing radical activism, which are commonly perceived as similarly threatening phenomena. At the same time, respondents oppose themselves to 'average people' from a 'grey zone', who are afraid of making decisions and therefore remain in the field of apolitical 'undecideds' inbetween the right and left political 'extremes'. Activists characterise 'the middle' as unreflexive, ignorant, indifferent, undecisive, passive, disunited, apolitical and susceptible to populist and nationalistic ideas.

History is seen as characterised by the constant repetition of similar plots, which can be overwritten if we learn the lessons history teaches. In general, young people appear to be more sensitive to tragic historical events, like wars and revolutions, as they perceive them as an important experience for gaining a better insight into human nature and as a point of departure for future development. Along with national history, respondents articulate moments linked to the history of their movements and try to reconstruct its essence via its past, even if that had been uneven and discontinuous. Indeed, the new history is being written right now, through the creation of new historical figures, generational symbols and commemoration days.

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