



PARTISPACE

SPACES AND STYLES OF PARTICIPATION

Non formal and informal possibilities of young
people's participation in European cities

PARTISPACE
working paper
D5.3 Evaluation
of action research

Young people's participation: learning from action research in eight European cities

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This Working Paper is published in the Working Paper Series of the international research project “Spaces and Styles of Participation. Formal, non-formal and informal possibilities of young people’s participation in European cities” (PARTISPACE).

The project involves ten research teams from Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

Further information on the project is available the project website <http://partispace.eu>

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Published: 30th April 2018

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649416.



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1. Action research in Partispace

The objectives of this work package (see Partispace proposal) were to involve young people in local, city-based action research (AR) projects by encouraging and assisting them in carrying out their own research, developing 'products', and co-analysing findings. Recent developments in youth participation discourses have highlighted a broadening of the focus beyond involvement in public decision-making to recognising the significance of participation in the context of young people's everyday lives. The Partispace project acknowledges that participation does not happen only in response to adult agendas and in formal arenas, but that young people are also participating on their own initiative and in a myriad of ways. As such, the central concern of Partispace has been exploring and better understanding young people's own *styles* and *spaces* of participation.

One of the recurring themes emerging in the Partispace project is the extent to which participation is 'staged' by adults (what Pells, 2010 refers to as performed rather than lived participation) with an underlying pedagogic intention of 'educating' young people to be good citizens. Such a critique is both positive and negative. Whilst acknowledging that an emphasis on formalised participation may be limiting for young people in practice as well as in theory (in terms of understanding the broader ways in which young people can and do participate as citizens), the evidence also suggests that many young people do derive benefits from adult-led forms of participation. Nonetheless, and in the context of the increasing dissatisfaction of many young people with mainstream politics, young people are increasingly redefining the ways in which they participate in politics and wider society within and outside the political system.

A key development in youth participation has been the rise in social activism (Earls et al, 2017) from lobbying and counter-political activities that explicitly seek to contest the political status quo, to self-help and social movements defined by a primary concern with engaging in activities according to members' own agendas and interests. In some cases, group activities may not have an explicit political or change agenda at all, but may be characterised more as a form of 'social participation' (see Thomas 2007) where supportive relationships and common interests are important. These forms of participation are not, however, clearly demarcated 'types' despite research findings that self-initiated activities by young people around their own concerns may become more political as they pursue their own agendas. These findings also indicate that many instances of youth participation occur in quite organic and emergent ways and around the motivations, needs and interests of young people as they reflexively engage in some form of participation (social and/or political). In this respect, participation can be understood as a process guided more immediately in the 'here and now' by young people themselves.

Some of the varying interpretations and enactings of participation in current discourse and praxis are useful for making sense of the different action research projects (ARPs) in the Partispace project. Epistemologically, participation concerns involvement or activity of young people, organised by themselves or others, while participation discourses relate to young people taking part in research, development and decision-making processes. Whilst these processes focus on mainstream adult-dominated agendas, there is now also considerable

attention on youth-initiated processes and particularly youth-led research initiatives (see for example Acharya 2010; Kemmis, 2001). Ontological dimensions of participation are the concerns over how participation plays out in practice and the extent to which young people derive a sense of inclusion as equal citizens in society by, for example, acknowledging and treating them as users of public space and ensuring that they can benefit from equal rights and entitlements. Methodological interpretations of participation involve a democratic approach to research and decision-making. Whilst there are many research and decision-making processes that are broadly participatory because young people are involved, there is now also an established tradition of participatory research which draws upon post-positivist theories of knowledge production such as Participatory Action Research (Gibbons; Reason & Bradbury 2001; Kindon et al. 2010).

Based on these ideas, the AR phase of Partispace shifted the focus explicitly from exploring different forms of youth participation according to adult-led research formulations, to working with groups of young people to understand how participation might be significant in their own terms of reference and outside of adult agendas. The rationale for the AR, then, was to provide a space for young people in the partner cities to make sense of participation through their own 'lenses of meaning' by supporting them to do their own projects on issues and questions that they identify as important. Some of the ARPs developed upon existing projects, while others pursued new ideas, agendas, interests and concerns, and in some cases started develop new forms of participation.

The principal aims of the ARPs were to:

- Explore what participation might mean for young people if they are provided with an opportunity without predefined structures and processes
- Provide an opportunity for experiential learning using a participatory action research process with young people

The meta-questions guiding this phase of the research were:

- How can we understand how young people realise participation in action?
- How do young people construct meanings of participation in practice according to their own agendas?
- How do young people make sense of their own forms and styles of participation?
- What can we learn about the factors which influence young people's autonomous action?
- What forms and styles of participation might young people develop when they are free from constraints?

1.1. Action research methods

AR is a collaborative research process that seeks to 'create participative communities of inquiry' where 'inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers' (Reason and Bradbury, 2013, p1). It differs in a number of respects from more 'traditional' research approaches because it is principally

concerned with doing research *with* rather than *on* participants. AR centres all research participants in all of the research process as co-creators of knowledge.

Utilising this approach to learning, co-producers engage in cycles of action (where they gather evidence and explore issues) and reflection (where they make sense of the action together and plan further action and learning). Importantly, AR is experiential and practice-based (rooted in everyday life contexts); it may also be experimental in that it seeks to innovate thinking and practice about how participation is understood and enacted. AR is not a prescribed process or a set of pre-determined research methods. Rather it is guided by a set of varied principles:

- is a set of practices that responds to people's desire to act creatively in the face of practical and often pressing issues in their lives in organizations and communities;
- calls for engagement with people in collaborative relationships, opening new 'communicative spaces' in which dialogue and development can flourish;
- draws on many ways of knowing, both in the evidence that is generated in inquiry and its expression in diverse forms of presentation as we share learning with wider audiences;
- is values oriented, seeking to address issues of significance concerning the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the wider ecology in which we participate;
- is a living, emergent process that cannot be predetermined but changes and develops as those engaged deepen their understanding of the issues to be addressed and develop their capacity as co-inquirers both individually and collectively (Reason & Bradbury, 2013, p3).

Importantly, research participants also co-create AR's methods of inquiry throughout the learning process. Capturing the learning in its many forms takes place through the AR cycle and this learning is utilised in reflection and further planning using the co-created methods that are relevant to participants. The methods utilised by the Partispace ARPs are explored throughout the report (and include visual, aural and textual).

1.2. Process of the action research

From the beginning of the local, ethnographic case studies (where the focus was on exploring the range of forms of informal, non-formal and formal participation across partner cities using ethnographic and qualitative methods), city research teams were to encourage groups of young people to engage with their own research activities, assisting them with financial resources and logistical support. Ideally, the selection of groups and activities for the ARPs was carried out not by the Partispace researchers alone, but together with local advisory groups and the young people and groups who were part of the case studies. The working steps for the AR were:

- Dialogue with young people in the context of group discussions, in-depth case studies and local advisory groups on potential research issues and projects carried out by young people; selection within local advisory groups.
- Accompaniment and support of ARPs carried out by young people on issues and questions defined by them (N=depending on proposals, actors and resources); video projects, participatory observation, group discussions with peers may be developed.

- Assisting young people in documenting and presenting their research findings
- The solutions found to be researched by the local advisory group using young people as co-researchers.
- The production of at least one video film per city with young people to gather their perceptions on youth participation (activities, levels, obstacles).

In order to enable the AR with the young people, this phase of the Partispace project focused on engaging the young people in learning about participation through reflection in and from action. This involved, for example:

- Experiential, practice based (learning by doing in everyday life contexts)
- Starting from young people's stories, experiences and concerns
- Challenging orthodoxies and asking critical questions
- Creative processes of innovation – exploring and developing alternatives
- Realising new understanding and practices of participation (from young people)

The following section (0 unterhalb) describes the 18 Partispace ARPs. In short, many of the ARPs evolved from the previous ethnographic case studies, although it was not a requirement. Of the 18 ARPs, 13 of the groups were an ethnographic case study and five were not (see table 1 below for detail). The rationale for building upon the case studies was that it might be easier to engage young people in the AR if a prior relationship was established and if the young people decided to build upon the case study in an ARP in some way. Where an ARP developed from or within a case study, experiences varied. In the main, the relationships between the Partispace researchers and young people allowed groups to move from one phase of the research to the next with some ease; however, working with the same young people in both phases also presented difficulties, particularly in terms of the changing roles and relationships between 'adult' researchers and young people. Some of the ARPs came together more easily than others; some experienced difficulties in getting past adult professional gate keepers; and in some cases, young people were reticent because of uncertainty about what commitment was required. In most cases, however, the ARPs developed from the Partispace researchers having initial conversations with the young people directly or with youth leaders, followed by discussions with young people about possible projects. In keeping with the principles of AR, the projects did not follow a standard process but instead were shaped according to how each project group felt was appropriate to the aims and issues they were pursuing. The development of the projects involved (but was not limited to) the Partispace researchers:

- Exploring with the young people what is important to them in terms of participation, social issues, social change, uncovering knowledge, challenging assumptions, and what participation 'means' to them
- Exploring with the young people what they would like to 'do' together in terms of a project or piece of work

- Helping young people to develop their ideas, interests and projects (e.g. resources, training, and getting started)
- Supporting the young people to realise their projects through the process

The ways in which the AR evolved in Partispace are also explored throughout this report, and are part of the key learning from this phase of the project. The next sub-section introduces the 18 ARPs of the project – the contexts of the groups, the purposes of the ARPs, the AR process, and the ARP outcomes.

1.3 The 18 action research projects

For ease, this section of the report has grouped the ARPs according to the core aims that they set out to achieve. They are first listed in table 1, which also indicates (in the final column) if they were part of the ethnographic case studies (WP4) as well. The ARPs are then presented in the same order. The core aims of the projects - when they began - were grouped:

- *Struggles for inclusion and justice*, which were ARPs that sought recognition of a particular group of young people (such as refugees) as ‘full’ members of society with rights, needs and contributions to make.
- *Articulating values and identities*, which were ARPs in which ‘sub-cultural’ groups of young people (such as graffiti artists) appeared to be ‘navigating the margins’ of mainstream society to find ways of articulating their own values and identities
- *Finding solutions to social problems*, which were ARPs that addressed particular social issues that concerned young people, where the young people had personal stake in the issues or were acting out of altruism.
- *Peer activation and engagement*, which were ARPs that focused on encouraging and supporting young people to engage in participatory activities and to tackle barriers to their participation.

Table 1. Action research projects grouped by project aims

<i>Struggles for inclusion and justice</i>		<i>WP4</i>
Hidden	Manchester	
Islamic Youth Association	Bologna	✓
Solidarity with Refugees	Eskişehir	
The Box	Manchester	✓
<i>Articulating values and identities</i>		
Free Sport Association	Gothenburg	✓
Political and Cultural Centre	Frankfurt	✓
the Drama Group	Gothenburg	✓
Hoodboys	Frankfurt	✓
Hip Hop group	Frankfurt	✓
<i>Finding solutions to social problems</i>		
Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation	Plovdiv	✓
Youth Rights Association	Eskişehir	✓
Manchester Young Researchers	Manchester	✓
Girls Group	Zurich	
Youth workers	Eskişehir	✓
<i>Peer activation and engagement</i>		
Political Youth Association	Zurich	
Party Youth Section	Plovdiv	✓
Partirennnes	Rennes	✓
L’Epreuve	Rennes	

ARP aims: Struggles for inclusion and justice

The first grouping of ARPs are those where the young people within the group formulated a project that aimed to increase recognition for marginalised groups (such as refugees) as 'full' members of society with rights, needs and contributions to make.

Struggles for inclusion and justice: Manchester: Hidden

Context of Hidden

Hidden is a Manchester-based human rights organisation working with people of all ages in Greater Manchester who are at risk of having their rights denied. Hidden is a 'frontline organisation' that works with the displaced (that is, people facing challenges relating to citizenship, housing, deportation, employment, education, personal safety and other problems) and describes itself as an organisation that enables people's access to the services they need, and to release their abilities to find effective solutions to challenges facing them. These needs are constantly presenting and Hidden challenges and addresses situations with people whose human rights are being threatened.

Hidden's work is threefold: casework for asylum applications, campaigning around human rights issues, and research. Casework comprises Hidden's main work. It is impossible to estimate the number of people involved in the organisation as caseworkers become more or less active and people seeking asylum come and go.

Hidden did not take part in the ethnographic case studies in the Partispace project because members did not feel that the methodology of the case studies was in line with Hidden's principles of active participation. That is, that the organisation did not want Hidden members to be researched 'on'. This itself is interesting for the ARP. Central to all of Hidden's work is participatory action research (PAR). On its website, Hidden states that it works 'with people to help them to help themselves, to support them should they wish to work together rather than in isolation, to release their abilities to understand and find solutions to the situations they and others face in their displacement and asylum, and to develop and empower themselves and others as individuals and as communities'.

Hidden's research is concerned with advancing the body of knowledge about displaced people. Again, using a PAR model, Hidden researches 'any issue by involving the people who are affected by it, throughout the research process. These people can include clients and practitioners as well as managers, policy writers and policy ratifiers'. The research centres 'the people who are directly affected by the issue under study, be they the subjects of that issue - for example young people excluded from education or families exposed to violent attack - or workers who are grappling with that issue. Hidden enables their involvement in designing, developing and delivering research and then, with the findings gathered, deciding what findings are most important for what they can tell us, and how those findings can and should be communicated.' These principles informed the Partispace ARP from the outset.

Hidden's ARP process and aims

As none of the work in Hidden is 'on' its members (it is all 'with') and there is a clear expectation from the start that, as with casework, research projects will involve active

engagement and participation, introducing the idea of an ARP in Hidden, and starting the ARP, was organic and familiar in the space and to Hidden members. The young people to whom the research was introduced understood that their active participation in the ARP, from start to finish, was key. This compares to some of the other ARPs where the idea of PAR had to be explored before the work could begin. Indeed, the first session in Hidden (see below) opened up a series of discussions about participation and young people that was informed and coherent, from the very beginning, and which continued and developed over some weeks. Furthermore, the range of issues which the young people suggested they might explore in the ARP (see also below) indicates that they are engaged with issues around participation which affect their lives because it is part of the ‘everyday’ work that they do in and with Hidden.

The ARP began with a small scoping project which aimed to consider the following issues in order to create a fuller ARP:

- What the concepts ‘participation’ and ‘action research’ mean
- The barriers and opportunities available to ‘participate’ in action research
- The potential area/s that they would want to explore in the event that a substantive participatory action research activity becomes possible

Five young people, all of whom were seeking leave to remain in the UK, were part of the scoping study. The young people (aged 18 to 29) explored the meaning of participation to them and, importantly, non-participation and barriers to participation that they experience because they do not have legal status in the UK. From the outset of the scoping project, and discussions about work that they might do together, the young people were clear that their project would aim to create a dialogue with the public about the lived experiences of being a young person seeking asylum in Manchester and in the UK. The young people made several suggestions for the materials that they would create for starting a dialogue including compiling a newsletter, running an event, hosting a stand in the city center, or performing a play or drama. The five initial members of the group had at this stage of the ARP invited others (friends and family members) to be part of the project. The group now comprised 10 members. The larger group continued to work together to create ideas for the ARP though it was clear that one half of the group wanted to compile a range of materials about seeking asylum (e.g. photographs, stories and pamphlets) while the other half wanted to focus on writing and performing a play about lived experiences of asylum seeking. The young people in the ‘first’ group compiled short pieces of writing about their experiences (e.g. not being able to access degree-level education) but it was clear also that they were less engaged, as a group and individuals, in the ARP overall. It is difficult to say why that was the case (the opportunity to have the conversation did not arise) but there was a sense that most of the young people in this sub-group engaging only because of the money that they were being gifted to do so (part of the ARP involved an agreement that young participants would be gifted a small amount of money for their time and travel costs).

The focus of the ARP then became about the ‘second’ group who were working on a play together. The play, which was called ‘Faceless’, was written by one young person and

performed by three others. The play explores the invisibility of the asylum seeker and features two 'faceless' people and their interaction with a 'stranger'.

The remainder of the ARP involved the four young people in this subgroup rehearsing the play together in various locations in Manchester city centre, amending the script to reflect the young people's lived experiences of being Faceless and, finally, filming the play and preparing the 'final cut'.

Outcomes of Hidden's ARP

The learning from the ARP can be summed up in one, difficult sentence: participating in an unwelcome world. There is little doubt that the young people enjoyed taking part in the Project, exploring their creative skills, and being part of something that is important to them. They all felt rewarded by the project and knowing that they were part of something that could speak to the public about their experiences. Through the Project, they found belonging, emancipation, citizenship, and, despite a consistent and often unspoken sense of their own precarity, an undeniable sense of fighting back and fighting on.

There was a strong sense of the need for belonging and empowerment in spaces of participation. The young people unfailingly demonstrated their commitment to the play and to working together towards a play of which they could be proud. Participating in the Faceless Project also enabled the young people to explore their lived experiences of being a young person seeking asylum in Manchester. There was certainly a sense that expressing (and exploring) their experiences creatively was in some way emancipatory to them. They were empowered by their expression and hearing and using their voice, and they all persevered with the work, despite each of them experiences periods of profound personal difficulty.

Faceless became a form of citizenship and activism for the young people and the aim - showing their lives to the public - was always at the forefront of their minds. In this way, the young people wanted to invite other members of the community into their seeing and into their knowing. During many of the sessions filming and reflecting (and both), there was a sense of rawness in the young people - the periods of silence, the occasional frustration and upset, and the feeling of exposure. Nonetheless, this is a story that they young people want to share, and, indeed, feel compelled to share.

The script of the play, and the final film, are the main outputs from this ARP.

Struggles for inclusion and justice: Bologna: Islamic Youth Association

Context of the Islamic Youth Association

In Italy, as in other western societies, Anti-Islamic prejudice has grown significantly. This gives rise to challenges for young migrants in becoming 'included' in Italian society. Many young people experience an inner conflict as they live between two realities of feeling neither Italian nor Arabic. This project was therefore concerned with how young people might deal with their 'hybridity' as Italians of foreign origin and Muslims. The Islamic Youth Association is a national not for profit, free, independent non-political association that was founded in 2001 by young members of other Islamic groups. Each local branch is organised independently and involves young people aged 14-26. The Bologna Islamic Youth Association was founded in

2014. The main aim of the Islamic Youth Association is to promote the inclusion and civic engagement of young Muslims in Italian society and to support inter-cultural dialogue. The lead group consists of two young men and six young women aged between 18 and 22 years. All of the young people in the group have Italian citizenship and are students. The Islamic Youth Association meets in Bologna's Islamic Cultural Centre located on the city outskirts.

Islamic Youth Association's ARP aims and process

At the time of the research, the group was experiencing a decrease in the participants' number: from 60/70 to 20/15 people per meeting. The ARP's objectives were, then, to reflect, jointly and frankly, on participation in the association, bringing out its limits and addressing one or more possible strategies to overcome them.

In order to pursue these objectives, the first step involved promoting a genuine discussion by the group about the group. Three main elements constituted the necessary preconditions to succeed in opening up a constructive discussion:

1. Trust ties among the members of the group to allow each person to feel free to speak about his/ her own personal issues and problems within the association
2. A trusting relationship between the group and the research team
3. A more general trust in the possibility to change the situation concretely

The ARP was developed to involve an interweaving of reflection and action in the project design, shifting between reflection and action by reflecting on the processes and outcomes of the practical action. Three phases were identified:

1st phase: reflection:

- Individual reflection (shared with the group) concerning subjective understandings and experience of participation
- Reflection in a small group (shared with the entire group) concerning the meaning of participation in the Islamic Youth Association

2nd phase: collective discussion on the (initial) findings

- What has emerged from the 1st phase? How are we? Where are we going?

3rd phase: action

- Practical realization of a product (a video project) that is both a tool and a goal in itself
- Dissemination activities to promote the association and sharing some insights emerged through the project with other people

Thirty-five people took part in the whole ARP with different roles and levels of engagement. A core group of 5/ 6 people (all of them members of the board) took the initiative, ran the preliminary workshops and engaged in the organizational tasks with the support of the team. In addition, a group of around 10 people stood out as being very motivated in completing the whole project. The AR involved a mix of practical/ handheld activities (construction of paper artefacts, videos, etc.) with reflective narrative moments and group discussions (recorded on

posters, post-its, etc.). Dialogue emerged as being central to the learning and problem solving process and was useful to reach a deeper understanding of the situation and to take collective decisions.

Outcomes of Islamic Youth Association's ARP

Outcomes, in terms of action, were intertwined with reflection throughout the project so it is difficult to separate them. Nonetheless, some learning points can be identified from the project.

- The Islamic Youth Association is experienced as offering a non-formal space where young people can freely express themselves, relax, discuss serious issues as well and have fun, in contrast to school that is depicted as a place where youth participation (meant to be free expression of ideas, of creativity, of emotions) is inhibited.
- In the Islamic Youth Association, participation is not change-oriented, but is oriented towards personal development.
- A key purpose of the Islamic Youth Association is to provide a space where young people can express their hybrid identity and try to overcome their inner conflicts.
- A tension emerged between the constrictions of participation because of the Islamic Youth Association being located out of the city. On the other hand, being situated within the Islamic Centre ensures that young people are included in Islamic networks.

Struggles for inclusion and justice: Eskişehir: Solidarity with Refugees

Context of Solidarity with Refugees

The ARP took place in the Istiklal district of Eskişehir in Turkey, which has been strongly affected by the global refugee crisis, especially in the Middle East. Turkey has become a key player in the agreement with the EU about controlling a gateway into Europe and a possible transit route to other parts of the world. Eskişehir is one of the two biggest 'conditional satellite cities' to which refugees are sent to wait during the asylum-seeking process, and Istiklal is one district where a lot of refugees reside.

The Solidarity with Refugees ARP aims and process

The project was initiated in discussion between young people involved in a Partispace case study of street musicians and the Partispace research team. One of the young people was also part of an informal peer network, mostly consisting of university students, and took the initial lead in formulating how their social awareness of refugee issues could be transformed into more concrete action.

The aims for the ARP were broadly to facilitate the refugees' capacity and involvement to partake in the community and to protect their legal rights and personal health. These were to be manifested in language courses providing refugees with navigation tools in their daily lives, workshops on different themes, and music concerts and street food cooking (falafel on the street).

The group explored possible ways to realize their projects by contacting the local migration administration, schools for refugees, and contact point with refugees. This resulted in a

focussing of the target group and find key actors who liaise with refugees. A package of free of charge activities was announced throughout the neighbourhood. The process also benefited from help from a local organisation that loaned the group a flat for planning and some events.

The first public activity was a concert organised in the borrowed flat. The intention was to reach out to the refugee community and in order to 'test' the group's ideas. This led to a more concrete planning stage with consisting of a language course, three additional concerts, and a falafel cooking event at the street.

Nine refugees took part in the language course (daily Turkish) that was offered as a two hour lesson three times a week. There were some difficulties for the participants to follow all the classes due to other obligations (such as job opportunities), but it was nevertheless popular and the participants took essential steps to being able to everyday conversation. The language course ran twice and continued from mid-February until May 2017.

The group also organised three solidarity concerts, mostly with bands they themselves were part of or from their personal networks. The concerts had an intention to make socialising among local residents and refugees possible, but only few of refugees came to this event and stayed just for a short time.

The cooking falafel on the street event was, however, a popular activity bringing different groups together. Helping others to visualise the needs of the refugee group and raising awareness of their situation were some of the motives for this activity, and the actual activities taking place were facilitating this by playing games, eating and socialising.

Outcomes of the Solidarity for Refugees ARP

The learning from this ARP are summed up in six themes:

- AR is a method requiring specific training and skills, and researchers unfamiliar with this could be bewildered about the roles to take, what perspectives to apply and what the possible outcomes might look like. In this particular project, these aspects demanded a start-up phase in which the traditional research *raison d'être* had to be confronted by a challenging agenda. This took some time and role confusion, for the Partispace researchers and young people, and the relation between them, needed to be explored.
- Even if the AR aimed at levelling of roles, mutual negotiations and the facilitation of the young people's control over workflows, it was hard to put brackets around the roles. Normative hierarchical positions based on age, education and institutional belonging, were prevalent in the group. The process is indebted to the 'intermediaries' who bridged over gaps in age and hierarchical positions.
- In the preliminary planning, the expectations for what could be achieved were set at a very high level. In the process, lowering these expectations to something tangible and achievable was an important part of making something happen.
- The ARP had to consider and cope with contextual factors that were hard to control, especially the inclement weather conditions which affected the concerts because of lack of heating equipment in the borrowed flat.

- In order to make contact with refugee groups, the project needed to find ways to do so, and, further, needed to establish a trust in order to organise meetings. It was much harder to reach out to groups without being able to speak the same language and it was also hard to attract female participants.
- The group dynamics varied distinctively during the process. The initial broad engagement of the young people reduced over time. This meant that in many respects, one key person (the project's initiator) carried out the monitored all the work of the ARP (more or less) throughout.

Struggles for inclusion and justice: Manchester: The Box

Context of The Box

The Box is an arts-based social care charity in Manchester city centre which aims to work creatively to empower young men (aged 18-30) who are experiencing multiple disadvantage. The group is classed as 'non-formal' as participants tend not to engage with structures associated with the state and in formal/ informal styles of participation, whilst the charity aims to promote a flexible approach to engagement through project work, weekly drop-in sessions, outreach work and personalised support. The variety in approach aims to meet the needs of the men's lives, many of whom have experience of homelessness, alcohol and drug addiction, criminal activity, and mental health issues.

The Box's ARP aims and process

It emerged during the ethnography that The Box had reached the juncture, having recently come to the end of a two-year Arts Council programme where eight artists had completed residences to enable participants to experience a variety of art forms including digital/ visual art, theatre and music. George – the Creative Lead reported that many of the men in The Box had had considerable histories of engagement with the charity and were voicing a desire to take a greater lead role in the organisation and its activities. In this sense, rather than being 'done to' in the space, they wanted to be 'done with', both in how they were expected to perform in the participative space and how their progression needs were realised. The researchers and George agreed that the ARP offered an opportunity for the men to do this.

When the ARP was introduced to the men, their immediate inclinations for the project was that it should aim to raise public awareness of experiences of homelessness in Manchester. Homelessness had risen significantly in Manchester due to sustained cuts to welfare and restricted access to state-administered housing support. This resulted in the formation of homeless 'camps' around the city and an increase in forcible evictions of the homeless in occupied public spaces. Such tensions were visible in public rhetoric and state-administered framings of those who were positioned as 'deserving' and 'genuine' of help and those who were dismissed as fake or failing to engage in processes designed to encourage conformity. The prevalence and ubiquity of these discourses led The Box members to agree quickly and unanimously that the focus of the ARP would be to present an alternative perspective on the realities of being homeless, using the men's personal experiences as a reference point.

Through working with the researchers and George, the men conceived two main aims for the ARP. First, it was an opportunity for empowerment through the use of creative practices to make their stories visible. Second, it allowed the men to act as co-inquirers by engaging in a reflective process of what it means to take an active lead role and for facilitators and participants to make the transition from being ‘done-to’ to being ‘done with’. In particular, the project aimed to consider the following questions:

1. What does taking a greater lead role in the participative process mean to the men?
2. How does the transition in roles impact the pedagogy of participation as experienced by the facilitators and the men?
3. What can be learnt from the inquiry in terms of understanding the motivational and identity aspects of youth participation and in particular how such processes connect to notions of progression and empowerment?

Another partner of The Box required the men to use plants in their project. The ARP incorporated this requirement into their planning of the project. The planning stage of the ARP generated ideas around ‘guerrilla gardening’ as a way to occupy urban public space by creating planters (boxes of plants) which could be erected as a temporary art installation in the city. The men also explored recurring themes in their lives of visibility and fears of being judged by the public whilst begging, evoking imagery of ‘freak shows’ in Victorian Britain. The idea of creating ‘viewing boxes’ on the top of the planters to display aspects of homelessness sought to evoke dichotomies around being seen and unseen whilst inviting spectators to literally peer in, turn on the light and through this act, put themselves in someone else’s shoes. Furthermore, the flora and fauna in the bottom of the planters enabled sensual engagement on a different level whilst aiming to occupy the urban space and attract spectators in a different way. For example, one of the view boxes depicted the shame of washing in a public bathroom, whilst participants were made to feel like voyeurs as they peered in.

At the same time, they could rub their fingers on the leaves of one of the plants in this planter and learn that the leaves generate a soap-like substance when they are rubbed, which can be used to wash. The spectators could also catch a putrid, lingering smell of the substance when they did so.

The viewing boxes and planters depicted five realities of the lived experience of being homeless, including privacy and personal hygiene, mental health, drug addiction, finding a place to sleep (‘lost’), and seeking support (‘found’). The boxes were constructed over three months with George and the men. There was some inconsistency in terms of which men attended mostly due to the chaotic nature of their lives but over the course of the project, three men in particular (all in their mid- to late 20s) took the lead and engaged most regularly. Once finished, the planters were temporarily installed in five locations in the city related to each theme. Whilst the boxes were installed, the men lead four walking tours around the boxes. Members of the public and affiliates of The Box were pre-invited to join the walking tours and to hear the men’s stories of homelessness and making the planters, and to view the creative outputs of the projects.

Outcomes of The Box's ARP

The learning from the 'Lost and Found' project indicated the importance of using creative techniques and the act of making to facilitate dialogue, to enable meaning-making, and to become part of a collaborative project. For example, arts-based practices helped many of the men in The Box who had been long silenced to be able to express themselves through symbolisation. Such processes support participants in feeling in control, as they are able to give significance in non-literal and ambiguous ways meaning that they can decide how and to whom they reveal meaning.

Similarly, expression through creative means can also enable feelings to be conveyed but unlike the spoken word, the meaning can be multiple and contradictory rather than purely rational. The creative work showed the importance of provisionality and techniques which enable a helpful distance from ownership which allow participants to try out different versions of themselves. Such processes are vital for changing power relations and for creating opportunities for identity-making that are different from those to which many participants are accustomed.

However, at times, the project also felt disempowering for the men. The sensitive and personal nature of many of the men's stories meant that when entering the public frame the process exposed some vulnerability and feelings of alienation. This meant that at times the process felt exploitative whilst the retelling of their stories during the repeated walking tours or watching it back on film had re-traumatising effects and was in danger of being further stigmatising.

The second theme in relation to the purpose of the project was in relation to offering progression opportunities for the men who had expressed a desire to take a more active and lead role in the organisation and their work. The learning facilitated by the ARP also stimulated conversations of a cynical nature of how involvement in such projects can really and positively facilitate progression opportunities for the men outside the confines of the space. As above, although parts of the process were empowering there was also a sense that the experience made the men acutely aware of their own powerlessness. Whilst raising awareness, there is the reality that it was likely their involvement would not dramatically change the precarious nature of their lives or secure more stable and positive experiences of the job market. Such findings challenge the expectation inherent with AR methodology that requires participants to report learning followed by change and positive action meaning that issues of tokenism also come to the fore. In addition to this, the nature of how informal learning can necessarily involve the appreciation of one's own limited sphere of influence and in the men's case limited access to forms of capital, which might enable them to challenge such processes.

The main conclusion from the ARP in The Box can be summarised as the 'unexpected' in terms of outcomes. Using arts-based practices there was evidence that such processes had enabled forms of empowerment to materialise. However, the 'unexpected' in this case was concerned with the acute dis-empowerment that the men reported feeling because of their engagement with the public on issues of homelessness. A film charted the process throughout and, alongside a collection of photographs, is a key output from the project.

ARP aims: Articulating values and identities

The second group of ARPs are those in which ‘sub-cultural’ groups of young people (such as graffiti artists) aimed to ‘navigate the margins’ of mainstream society in order to find ways that they could articulate their values and identities.

Articulating values and identities: Gothenburg: Free Sport Association

Context of the Free Sport Association

The history of the Free Sport Association can be traced back to an informal group of young people with previous experiences from action sports, who started to practice parkour together. Soon their skills became known and they were invited to several events to show parkour to the public. They were also asked for parkour training courses. This interest demanded a better organisation and structure than the young people had at the time. After having tried out different constellations of collaboration with already established associations, they decided to start their own autonomous association. Today Free Sport Association is an organisation with about 600 members. Besides outdoor practicing, they have a training facility at a Spontaneous Sport Hall where they cohabit with associations for gymnastics, wrestling, skateboarding, cross fit, BMX-riding and kickboarding. The number of members in these associations together is about 2000. Besides being a sports hall, the Spontaneous Sport Hall is described as a place for friendship and peer interaction, and is also a concrete symbol for a collective identity. The physical place is a large former warehouse, rented on a short-term lease. The area around the venue is undergoing a change and the building is soon to be demolished. As such, the associations in the Spontaneous Sport Hall have to find a new place for their activities.

Free Sport Association’s ARP aims and process

The Free Sport Association was one of the cases in the Gothenburg ethnographic case studies. As an ARP, the group wanted to further develop an idea which had emerged years before – to design and develop a new form of democratic meeting place for young people where several types of activities, for example arts, sports and computer based groups, could be gathered under one roof.

The most acute and tangible reason for developing a new meeting place was the impending demolition of the space, but instead of finding a new place for just themselves, they wanted to use the experiences and knowledge from the development of the Free Sport Association and the Spontaneous Sport Hall to facilitate a space for many more young people to practise their interests and develop new ideas in a democratic and supportive environment. To incorporate this vision within the frame of an ARP, the group decided that possible goals and research questions for the ARP group would be to explore, describe and develop what they wanted to accomplish, how they wanted to achieve their aims, finding support for the idea, finding members, and learning from the process.

The first ARP gathering was in November 2016 and soon after, a small ARP group of three Free Sport Association members was formed. When the ARP ended in September 2017, the group had developed a plan that met the goals they had set up for the ARP. In short, their plan consisted of four parts – ideology, pedagogy, networking and economy. After finishing the

plan, the group decided to take the ideas back to the other members of the organisation and then develop a more detailed plan together about the usage of the new facility.

A crucial part of the ARP was to develop a common ideology for the new meeting place, and the group decided that the fundamental values should be inclusion, openness, cross-border work and far-reaching democracy. Hence, the space should be self-governed and self-maintained by its members, and collaboration on all levels should be encouraged. Another important part was to utilise and encourage creative and innovative thinking. Thus, they needed to plan for further development possibilities from the start. The idea is to make 70% of the space available for more permanent activities, and to leave 30% for projects not yet fully thought out. A success of the Spontaneous Sport Hall had been that smaller associations had merged and formed a larger entity. By organising themselves in this way, they had managed to make themselves heard and to exert more influence. The Free Sport Association wanted to apply this approach to the new meeting place and one part of the ARP was about finding potential collaborators who support the idea and who wanted to be part of a further development. The closest collaborations developed by the end of the ARP had been with a group of engineer artists and a group of youth workers. The ARP group also wanted to address what they think of as resource solvency when it comes to local authorities favouring investments in large scale sport facilities and venues. When presenting their ideas to local politicians, they are usually are praised for their work at Spontaneous Sport Hall, but when it comes to allocating resources, the more traditional sports are given precedence over new ones. To address this question, the group have come up with three different financial suggestion depending on various funding scenarios.

Outcome of Free Sport Association's ARP

In the ARP process, reflection and evaluation were both a source of learning and a way to create new knowledge. Unlike much formal learning with a well-defined beginning and end, this evaluative approach is more of a circular process, where the goal is not as clear and often becomes the starting point of something else.

During their working process, the ARP group let their ideas pass through an ideological screen. Interestingly, no distinctions were made between their interests in parkour and their ideas about social awareness, democracy and participation. This ideological framework appears to neither be a result of being engaged in the sport nor something that is necessarily part of individual members' practice, but more so associated with a transgression of barriers and an expansion of hopes and dreams. In this way, it is both a product of the actions and communications taking place, and a steering device toward further actions and goals.

The ARP group had on several occasions tried to find financial support for their ideas from municipality officials, but never got any response except from an appreciative 'pat on the back'. In their ARP, the group explained this as a willingness of officials to promote traditional activities instead of new ones. However, this is perhaps also an example of how Swedish youth policy where authorities, a key part of realising arenas for youth participation, have a way of rejecting young people's own initiatives when young people opt to leave the formally organised pathways and make spaces of their own. An important learning from this for the area of youth

work and facilitating youth participation is to have a readiness to challenge traditional practices and thinking, as well as existing structures.

Articulating values and identities: Frankfurt: Political and Cultural Centre

Context of the Political and Cultural Centre

The Political and Cultural Centre relates both to a group of about 30 young persons and adults in the age from 16 to 35 years and a centre for arts and political debate run by the group for 19 months in a city close to Frankfurt. Many of the members of the Political and Cultural Centre had a background in political and arts engagement and education. The building which hosted the centre was an old three-story building that was rented on a short-term contract. The group left the space when they did not succeed in extending the contract and as the house was being demolished. The heart of the centre was a café-like room and was the main place open for socialising, but there was also a basement where debates, cultural events and bar evenings were held, and a top floor open for different activist groups.

The centre's formal organ for decisions was a house-meeting, a plenary in which all important issues related to the care-taking of the house, activity planning, and social issues concerning relations within the Political and Cultural Centre, were brought to discussion. The decisions were supposed to be taken in consensus amongst the members.

Even if the Political and Cultural Centre was part of the case study of the Partispace project, the ARP functioned as a key in their contact-making because of its possibility to join different motives and interests. This worked in two ways: the Partispace researchers were able to study a self-controlled manifestation in a broad framework of participation, while the Political and Cultural Centre members were about to get access to reflections from outsiders and to finance some of their ambitions.

The Political and Cultural Centre's ARP aims and process

The official aim was around the articulated question of: (how) is the group able to create a balance between art, culture and politics while keeping up with maintaining the centre? The connected aim was then to document and reflect upon the activities of the centre and to gather some ideas on it from visitors to the space.

Negotiations over roles, expectations and responsibilities were something that signified the ARP all along from the initial contacts between the research group to the finishing reflection over the documentation of and learning from the project. These negotiations were important not least to the first planning phase, where some members in the Political and Cultural Centre viewed the researchers and their connection to the EU suspiciously. The EU was for them strongly associated with short-comings in managing the current refugee crises. Finding a legitimate role for the Partispace researcher was not easy to accomplish. Negotiations were also related to the possible gain the Political and Cultural Centre could get from contributing to the research project. The group had difficulties in financing the house as it was, and room for improvement was scarce, even if the heating system was in need of renovation and a coffee machine could contribute to the space.

The next phase concerned the question of how to do the more concrete gathering and compiling of documents, taking photos and collecting notes and comments from Political and Cultural Centre members and visitors. The ARP was directed by a workgroup. During this phase, the workgroup, however, felt that the project was hard to break down into manageable steps, and they got little support from the plenary even when they asked for it. They were also forced to listen to criticism from others about the photos taken and other documentation. The researchers and the ARP had several contacts through which they tried to make the project feasible. The key contact person for the research group had to make clear statements and 'put her foot down' to really make things happen. The most productive work in the ARP, arguably, came about from an idea to organize a one-week exhibition at the Political and Cultural Centre. This was to show works of art done within the framework of Political and Cultural Centre and the Centre space.

The group ended up delivering a report about the Political and Cultural Centre where they documented the one-week exhibition, showed messages to the Partispace project from members and visitors (from a letterbox set up at the space), collected pictures and texts about the Political and Cultural Centre, and added reflections from five members on the progress and challenges of running the Political and Cultural Centre alongside significant pictures from the activities.

Outcomes of the Political and Cultural Centre's ARP

At the individual level, the ARP shows how identity formation and role expansion can be nurtured within a project such as this, but also how the realization of individual ambitions can feed back into knowledge about what possibilities and challenges go with the project. The first is from the contact person responsible for the ARP who had to challenge existing but informal status hierarchies to make her way possible. This could have provided important knowledge on one's capacity and how to make it more realisable. The latter is formulated by one of the innovators behind Political and Cultural Centre as a learning on how to play a certain game, what resources this needs, and what one should be prepared for. The experiences fed into a kind of maturing process.

On a collective level, the ARP contributed to collective identity by creating something tangible in terms of the documentation of the Centre's history, which became important both for acknowledging their work, intentions and struggles and for their and potential others' memory of what could be possible. Still, the ARP had also had to challenge the structure and motivations of the Political and Cultural Centre, since there seems to have been ambivalence in what fuelled their engagement in the project and how it could be facilitated.

The learning also concerns the relations between the Partispace research group and the ARP. First it was hard to find out what this actually could be focussing on because of the group already had developed so much energy and creativity of themselves. The question became: what 'room' did they have for, and what needs did they have of, support from and collaboration with researchers in a project? In addition, it was difficult to find an alliance with them since the Partispace team represented something (the EU) about which the Political and Cultural Centre were generally critical.

Lastly, the ARP also shows the meeting between different intentions and understanding of what makes 'good participation'. The research group restrained some of the wishes of the members but not fulfilling ideas of the ideal ARP and what could be financed by the Partispace project. Even if some of their group's expectations could have been legitimate (e.g. a new coffee machine), and even if they in their negotiation over the project came up with some kind of common agreement, this challenged other assumptions in the project, such as being participation-led (influenced), and equal in relations and mutual benefits.

Articulating values and identities: Gothenburg: The Drama Group

Context of the Drama Group

The Drama Group (formal/informal participation) is a group of young people engaged in drama, performance and creative activities. The group was initially one of the six case studies that the Gothenburg team covered during the autumn of 2016. At that time, the group consisted of ten members, nine young women and one young man aged 18 to 21. Their engagement and attendance rate in the group activities varied; six to seven members comprised the core group. All members had some kind of theatre background, some of them through programs organised by the municipal Culture School, others by engagement in other creative activities. Some of the members knew one another for many years, not the least through their participation in drama classes at the Culture School. Other members were newcomers to the group.

During the ethnographic phase, the Drama Group was a part of the organisational structure of the Culture School. However, when the members had turned 18 years old, they were no longer entitled to participate in the regular theatre programs at the Culture School and so they turned into a group 'in transition' to becoming a self-managed group. Early on, the group also decided that their common work should result in a concrete play that, they could set up for an audience.

The Drama Group's ARP aims and process

At this stage of the fieldwork, the research team started to consider involving the Drama Group in the AR phase. In terms of participation, this particular ARP encompassed a process of gradual shift in the facilitation of participatory practice – a shift away from participating within the formal structure of the Culture School towards self-initiated and self-managed participation, and this shift became the focus of the study. Besides this personal dimension, the group's ambition to communicate some kind of a meaningful message to the world was also central to the project. In a joint workshop, the Partispace researchers and the young people agreed that the research team was going to a) follow and document their working process and b) support their process towards becoming an independent theatre group. For the purpose of documentation their working-process, the group was provided with a video camera.

During their working process, the Drama Group encountered many obstacles, which the group has had to address. First, keeping the group intact was a struggle. Directly after the start up in January 2017, a couple of the members decided to leave the group, mostly because of lack of time and other obligations such as education and work. In this dynamic period of young adulthood, young people are supposed to make many choices in life so it was not surprising that producing a play was not prioritised. Members leaving the group made it hard, however,

to achieve a working flow and continuity. A small core group (consisting of five members) continued and tried to steer the work forward.

At the beginning of the project, this group met regularly but soon new difficulties arose due to divergent visions about the choice of content of the play they were about to write. The group tried out the writing process for a couple of weeks and then met for an evaluation. When they realised they were not getting anywhere, they decided to choose another path. Instead of writing their own material, they started looking for existing manuscripts. Another problem they faced had to do with the members' relations to each other. Most of them were also close friends and met a lot on their free time and in the play-writing process, they had difficulties in keeping balance or a distance between the personal and the professional sides of their relationship.

On couple of occasions, the group reached out to theatre officials for support. The response they got was non-supportive, which resulted in a feeling of not being taken seriously. This lack of recognition left the group with the belief that they had to struggle a lot in order to be noticed. This often made them less motivated.

At the time of finishing the ARP in June 2017, the future of the group was uncertain. What happens with the group depends on different life projects and plans of individual members.

Outcome of the Drama Group's ARP

The ARP did not result in a finished theatre production but even so, the group was in many ways still satisfied with the learning outcomes of their working process. According to the group, learning does not necessarily need to be characterized by an endpoint or a final destination or, in this case, the staging of a play. Failing and reflecting upon things that have not worked out is also a vital part of the learning process.

The group continuously reflected upon their own process but also about norms and morality, what is acceptable to put on a stage and what is not, what the group would like to communicate, whose voices counts, and whose are often overshadowed, the risks of certain groups of people being offended from a certain message, and the responsibility they have as artists and performers. By discussing and arguing about these issues, the group came closer together and gained a critical consciousness and reflexive knowledge.

The group also gained a deeper understanding about the complexities of artistic work. Reaching the right balance between freedom and constraint, finding a best possible context that helps bring about creativity, inspiration, and courage, often requires a lot of experience and a lot of doing, trying and failing. In the spirit of an amateur, the independent group the process was hard but also educational, due to the great level of personal responsibility of some individuals in the group to move the process forward. In this respect, the ARP can be understood as a first experience of the independent world of theatre. They have learned that in order to reach their goals, they need to invest much more time and to create a more robust and regular working structure.

Engaging in Partispace, both as a case study during the ethnographic phase and as an ARP, was an educative experience for the group. It heightened their self-awareness, their ideas about what they are doing and where they are heading, and it helped them conceptualize and better come

to terms with their work and to sharpen their reflexivity. This kind of learning has had an impact on all aspects of their working process, from logistics to the content of the play.

Articulating values and identities: Frankfurt: Hoodboys

Context of the Hoodboys

The Hoodboys is a group of graffiti artists that were included in the Partispace project already as a case study. The crew consists of eight core members and two prospects or newcomers. Their interest in graffiti can for many of them be traced years back, and they have experience of both illegal and legal painting. All members are all occupied with either work or studies (arts, architecture, social sciences and design). Five of them have foreign background, meaning they have parents who immigrated to Germany.

The graffiti painting scene represents for them a parallel world in which they are in control, can create, and express in ways that that could be recognized from both other crews and the public.

Originally, the crew was one of those subcultural formations that found spaces in the public they could use for graffiti, and the group is still involved in these illegal activities. Over time, however, along with their skill development, they have become more and more occupied in transferring their competencies into commercialised arenas, in which they get payed for their artistic work. Spraying in public spaces are still a part of their collective identity. Nowadays, the group also meets at a youth centre where they have access to a wall of their own onto where they can experiment and refine their art.

The Hoodboys' ARP aims and process

The aim for the AR was to establish an event for the creation of graffiti (a jam), and to document this in a way that could reach out to the public about graffiti culture and what it could mean for individuals and groups to be a part of it. In doing so, the group wanted to communicate a new understanding of the culture – about a world existing parallel to the ordinary – and more generally to make some exemplary contributions to understanding different forms of participation. A video was chosen as the communication tool that could be given to interested parties and potential stakeholders of provisions for youth and the wider public.

The working process of the ARP had a necessary connection to the initial establishment of the case study. It was hard work for the research group to make contact with the group, and even harder to build up enough trust and confidence to start the research. The group viewed the Partispace researcher with great suspicion and looked for clues as to whether she could be part of what they consider a repressive social system or if there were any other traps they could fall into. Previous knowledge of a youth worker became essential in the contact making and further trust building, since he could act as a gate-keeper that initially guaranteed the character and role of the researcher.

After having established some general agreements about the ARP, the working process went on in four steps. The first thing was to get access to the necessary equipment and for the researcher to meet with the whole crew to establish initial trust and to initiate further contact. They met outside a can store and the crew went on in a deliberate and organized way to decide

upon what colours should be chosen so that the individual contribution matched the general, collective work. The second step consisted of the jam and recording of footage of the jam. The youth centre agreed to the jam taking place there. The group followed a silent and collectively internalised working order. The individual members became as of part of a common body, taking on (in the spraying) where one of them had left off, and nurturing and refining the idea they had decided upon before of the ideas that evolved in the process. A manifestation of the group's acceptance of the researcher happened when she asked them to draw the Partispace logo and they invited her to add some painting to it herself. All along the jam, a film-maker documented the event.

The third step considered joint work by the Partispace researcher and the crew to create a manuscript for the accompanying narrative (for the video) about graffiti and its relation to themselves and the public space. The researcher took the role as a facilitator, organising and allocating resources for the process. This went on with an open brain-storming from different themes proposed from the researcher that ended with a large documentation of ideas and thoughts. These were collected and later condensed into a narrative associated to the film. A local rap artist read the narrative and the film-maker cut and connected the footage and the audio.

The fourth step included a presentation of the film and discussions of it, and an exploration of the learning coming out from the process and generally about youth participation.

Outcomes of the Hoodboys' ARP

On individual level, the ARP shows how personal and social identity could be intertwined in collective action of a youth group. The jam, the production of the video, and the video text are all focused on the collective group of the graffiti culture. But all this work could not have been done if there were not individuals that actively contributed with their talents and energy. In other words, the collective mind and body is a crucial component of the kind of youth cultural activities the Hoodboys realized, but this was dependent on the individuals creating the collective from their own willingness, dreams and desires.

AR is a reciprocal process where different knowledge is produced. At the same time as the researcher gains knowledge from the young people and their activities and culture, the young people learned in an informal way about the researcher's world. Together they learned in the articulation process both about how to work together, and about the specific subject of graffiti.

The process as a whole can also be used to shed light upon the process of 'generation change' within a youth culture setting. First, one importance of the concept of generation change is that it considers more than a maturing process of an individual, in which young people when they grow older leave some of the groups and activities that earlier were organising parts of their lives. The concept was actively used among the young people themselves and suggested that the individuals were connected to a collective, and also that this collective was part of something more than the group – something that could be transferred between older members and the newcomers in a kind of socialisation process. The new members take over from the older generation, but they are not just supposed to be fulfilling the established order; rather, they are invited, and indeed expected, to make their own contribution to the collective in order

for it to survive. And the older members in this case are not leaving the group, as such, but rather moving in different ways towards a new career closely linked to graffiti.

Lastly, coming close to a group whose habitus involves a suspicious attitude requires a lot of energy, openness and commitment. A strong facilitator to make contact possible for the researcher, as in this case, is necessary because a gate-keeper can at least initially function as a vicarious holder of trust while temporarily lending his/ her aura to the researcher.

Articulating values and identities: Frankfurt: Hiphop Group

Context of the Hiphop Group

The project involved a group of young people who came together for the AR. They were aged 21 to 27 years old and drawn to each other because of their interest in hiphop music (though one preferred RnB). Initially, three young men and one young woman who took part and a further young man and young women joined them later. In practice, their joint activities related to music was about sampling beats, doing beat boxing, writing lyrics and performing jams. They formed as a group because of their joint acquaintance with a youth centre; there, one of the youth workers functioned as a gate-keeper (or rather door-opener) between the young people and the researchers in Partispace.

The Hiphop Group's ARP aims and process

The aim for the ARP could be broadly formulated as facilitating young people's voice and expression in order for them to be heard and to reach out to wider society, and to also be to perform artistically on stage.

The first part of the project was to form a group and to contribute with the resources needed to get things started. The youth centre was a good place for this, since it gave access to a recording studio as the group needed electronic equipment as well as rooms for socialising and writing and discussions over compositions and lyrics. The gatekeeper was helpful in this, since he had keys to the centre and was able to give the group access to, and responsibility for, the space outside opening hours.

While the group is not an established group that spent time together outside the rehearsals they were clearly defining the time spent with the group as around their joint interest in music and what it could mean for them. Still it was a hobby alongside other commitments, such as school obligations.

A hallmark for the group was the first concerts, especially when they reached out to a broader public of friends, parents and other interested parties. They performed with songs that they had composed themselves. The gatekeeper/ youth worker was also a rap artist and he too performed at the concert with his crew. Partispace helped to purchase a mixing board, some microphones and contributed to advertisement costs

The group did not break up at the end of the ARP, even if their coming together was for the ARP. They were still active and continuously working on their development and forming their talent.

Outcomes of the Hiphop Group's ARP

The learning from this ARP touches on the connection between the individual and the social identity of being part of a group. The hiphop act, their preparations and consequences for individual formation of selves open up both for the individuals to display and give voice to their situations and perceptions of society and to link this within a collective doing of something together. In this way, the individuals are woven together with the social group and belongingness. The hiphop genre and its social framing also provides a framework for thematising how subordination and marginalisation could have meaning for young people, even if it is also a part of the merchandised music industry. While not being from somewhere where hiphop originates, the genre can still function as a framework of recognition that has spread in a globalised manner and lend itself as a tool to connect similar feelings of not being fully integrated or having the same opportunity as others. In this sense, hip hop can function as a carrier for protest and mediator for social protest and thus societal participation.

ARP aims: Finding solutions to social problems

The third grouping of ARPs were those that set out to address particular social issues in their project. These issues, generally, concerned young people and were often personal to them. Some of projects in this grouping acted out of a sense of altruism.

Finding solutions to social problems: Plovdiv: Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation

Context of the Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation

The Foundation was created in 2013 by six young people with a small donation from one of the leading economists in Bulgaria and the president of another large foundation. Initially, the Foundations main aim was to stimulate greater citizen activity and to establish contacts with other youth NGOs in the city. Later they spread their activities beyond civil society to include cooperation with the city authorities. In the few years since its formation, the Foundation has become recognisable in the city and is a preferred partner of other non-governmental organisations. Local media also pay attention to the Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation. The same six people (four young women and two young men) are still working in the Foundation and many more volunteers occasionally contribute to the Foundation's campaigns. The volunteers are mostly teenagers from secondary high schools in the city. Their funding comes from application for projects to national and international organisations.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation's ARP aims and process

The Foundation acts as a platform for communities seeking creativity, productivity and increasing public good through collaboration. This group was chosen for the AR because their main goal as stated in their Statute is 'encouraging youth participation'. Unlike other youth organizations in Plovdiv, its presence in public life is visible. They are also interested in claiming that they work well with the authorities and do not complain that their voice is not heard. At the outset, the Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation already had the idea of finding a market solution to the problem of what to do about a group of decaying and abandoned buildings of high cultural significance in the city. There had been mass protests about the authority's neglect of this cultural monument and the young people wanted to see what ideas for transformation of the entire complex could emerge from a group of young people who had

previously taken a training course in entrepreneurship and how they would imagine the future design of the complex. For the Partispace researchers, this case was interesting in order to see how the young people would argue the business, cultural and political aspects of the problem and its solutions. The objectives were:

- to show that the young people could be active participants in changing their environment;
- to present various forms of participation such as generating ideas, sharing them with the local authorities, making a survey among other young people and gathering their support through initiating a campaign of their own.
- to see whether levels of youth involvement could be significantly raised if young people face a problem which is familiar to them and touches their ordinary activities.

At the outset, the group found that several large NGOs had also become involved in the site the young people so organised a group discussion with high school students to explore alternative ideas for the site for the project. The students argued for a project that was closer to their everyday lives and the group made a decision to focus instead on the transformation of a schoolyard which had fallen into a neglected state so that it could be used by other young people and be turned into a place they would like to visit and appropriate as their own. The school students initiated the project but it was facilitated by young people from the youth foundation. In the first instance, the young people consulted the city council to explore the physical parameters and possibilities for developing the land. Next, they organised a meeting with school students to garner their interest and explore ideas for renovation. A skate park was the dominant idea put forward. Issues concerning cost were considered and used to refine the idea. The agreed way forward focused on developing a recreational park with different facilities, with the future possibility of a skate park if funding was available. Tasks were assigned including making a 3-D visualisation of their ideas, seeking cooperation with the school and city council officials and mobilizing the support of school students. Plans were promoted through a media campaign.

Outcomes from the Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation's ARP

There were a number of outcomes from the ARP in the form of learning. They were

- The project depended on the inclusion of whole community
- The project also depended on the cooperation of the authorities
- The young people found that projects take longer than expected and projected
- The Assumptions that classmates (other young people) would not be interested in the project were refuted
- Young people's engagement was stronger when the focus is of immediate relevance to their interests and distance between young people and stakeholders is less

Finding solutions to social problems: Eskişehir: Youth Rights Association

Context of the Youth Rights Association

The Youth Rights Association was relatively new when it met the Partispace project during the projects mapping phase in Eskişehir. The young people involved were university students that had gained knowledge about young people's rights and youth mobility from their studies. While they found several NGOs were involved in youth mobility, there were none engaged in advocacy focussing on young people's rights. When included as an ARP in Partispace, the initial ideas were to organize a workshop on youth rights as a booster for their starting up. This idea was soon changed into a training module offered from the Partispace group, because they found that there are several workshops around, and their contribution would just be one in a row.

The Youth Rights Association's ARP aims and process

The aim for the ARP group was to produce a game serving as a tool for youth participation and a video explaining the game's rules and organisation. The game was inspired from an existing game on 'Take a step further but unlike it be self-instructive and manageable by young people themselves without a youth worker.

The main activity in this ARP was the two days training module/workshop which focused broadly on youth participation. The participants discussed and agreed the content of the module before it started. The research group together with seven youth workers with long experience from youth work and youth participation assembled from the Partispace local advisory board took an active part in the workshop. The findings from the Partispace case study were used to start and focus the attention themes around participation, such as the spatial dimension and the meaning of space for young people's participation; controlling, opening and defending spaces and the temporality of participation divided in regular, occasional and episodic. The themes were given time to be discussed amongst the ARP group, with the result of concentrating their work on participation and providing a tool used for reflection, and later producing an accompanying video about the use, aims and rules of the game.

By the end of the ARP, the game had reached the stage where it was about to be tested with young people; the video was yet to be produced.

Outcomes of the Youth Rights Association's ARP

The ARP produced the following learning.

The cross-border and joint work between the research group, practitioners and young people on youth participation and young people's rights was very fruitful deepening an understanding and application of research results in real life settings.

The process had by the end of the ARP allowed for identifying central themes and connecting theory, practice and everyday experiences to each other.

Finding solutions to social problems: Manchester: Manchester Young Researchers

Context of the Manchester Young Researchers

The Manchester Young Researchers, aged 11-18, were part of a formal representative group and were motivated to get involved in different forms of initiatives. MYC is a formal youth participation structure and is run by young people for young people. It is concerned with giving young people in the city a voice and in enabling their views to be heard, and involving young people in decision making. The reason for working with this group in an ARP was to see how the young people might participate outside of formal structures.

Manchester Young Researchers' ARP aims and process

The formal group was also part of the ethnographic case studies. When that phase of the project was completed, the Partispace researchers approached the youth worker who runs the group to have an initial conversation with the group about developing an ARP. After initial discussions about what participation means to young people, and the meaning of the youth council for them, a smaller group of members chose to take part in the ARP. This group then became the self-styled Manchester Young Researchers.

At the first meeting of the project group, the young people decided that they wanted to do a project on identity and youth homelessness because of the large number of young homeless people in Manchester. This was one of two priorities the MYC had (the other was about tackling street harassment) and the young people seemed keen to honour the agenda of the MYC. This was also the priority issue for two individuals in the group who had considerable sway within the group. The Partispace researchers were mindful that The Box's ARP was also about homelessness, but, equally, they thought that it was important that the young people should pursue their idea. Manchester Young Researchers was a very different group – younger, and in most cases without direct experience of homelessness themselves – and the interest was in how they participated rather than the issue itself, per se.

The process of setting up the project was characterised by extensive discussions about the focus of the project and how it would unfold (e.g. as a research project or campaign?). The researchers made particular note of the ways in which the young people discussed and resolved issues as they emerged and how this process demonstrated the importance of dialogue and social learning in participation. The researchers also noted that the group was self-initiating but at the same time they valued input from the 'adult' researchers to clarify, challenge and to make suggestions. Ideas for what they would do for the project developed over a number of meetings and were summed up:

- to go out and capture the views and experiences of homeless people to use to educate other young people (for example in schools) about homelessness and to show alternative narratives (not stereotypes).
- to make a short film capturing the views and experiences of young homeless people to produce a resource booklet to help support young homeless people so they knew where to go for help.

In the third meeting, following an exploration of the issues concerned with youth homelessness, the group came up with the idea of 'being homeless for 24 hours' in order to get direct experience of the situation. However, following discussion they decided that this was too risky and raised too many ethical issues. For us as researchers, the safety issue was also a concern and led us to develop a simple safety agreement. In the end, the young people decided to just interview some homeless people via a homeless organisation. Serendipitously, they had connected with a homeless organisation via a homeless event at the library.

Throughout the project, the young people talked about having some kind of public event. Initially this focused on projecting their film about youth homelessness on the side of a city building so that everyone could see. This later developed into the idea of a project launch with key city officials, and then into a dialogue with city officials. Whilst the project seemed to develop as a 'research' project, there were also aspirations for activism, education and dialogue to promote change.

Between the third and fourth meeting, the Manchester Young Researchers met together and 'addressed current problems, worked out solutions and came up with a new action plan before the next meeting.' Most specifically, they arrived at a clearer picture of the structure of the documentary and decided on two parts: first, identifying what the problem is (based on interviews with homeless people); and second, deciding what they were going to do to address the problems.

Coming up with the ideas for the project seemed to be more straightforward for the young people than realising the project. While the members of the Manchester Young Researchers are not from privileged backgrounds, they have developed considerable skills through the MYC and other activities. A core group of four young people consistently attended meetings and another four attending periodically according to other commitments. Many of these young people were juggling lots of different issues and commitments in their lives and in the middle of the project, they got exam results and started to make plans for the next phases of their lives. The interruptions to attendance, and other life commitments, particularly over the summer period brought about disruptions to the ARP. Nonetheless, the young people tried to continue to communicate (e.g. through setting up a facebook group) though it was apparent that the group had begun to falter. The researchers suggested that there was an element of the young people valuing the social dimension of participation as well as (or more than) the instrumental value of solving a problem or seeking to make a difference. In addition, much of the responsibility for progress seemed to lie with one or two young people in the group. There was also a sense of frustration that they, as a group, were not making the most of the opportunity of the AR.

Maintaining commitment and ensuring progress within the group was about having a shared vision and a consistent approach. When commitment and progress seemed to falter in the group, the reason they identified was a breakdown in communication, in spite of having set up a Facebook group chat to keep in contact. In reality it seems that, for some members of the group at least, coming together to meet face to face may be more beneficial, in spite of popular assumptions that young people prefer ICT to maintain relationships.

Outcomes from the Manchester Young Researchers' ARP

The learning from the project focused on the young people's experiences of doing the project. Not least, the young people learned that bringing about social change is difficult. For example, whilst raising awareness had emerged as a key strategy for change, they were aware at the same time of the need for political solutions also. Nonetheless, in informing their choices about what they do, they demonstrated that they are far from passive recipients of democratic education, instead demonstrating a well-developed ability to reflexively understand and respond to the system and make choices for how they engage. They also demonstrated a degree of political literacy through, for example, discussing the extent to which a danger exists with politicians and political bodies pushing their own political agenda onto the project and self-promoting themselves.

The young people also reflected upon the significance of the space. One of the most important issues in the project was how vital it was to have the space to do the project. The significance of space for young people was less about place identity and the symbolism of place, and more about having a place to meet as a resource to make things possible. In addition, the significance of this project was in young people participating to make a difference on their own terms rather than through pre-existing participation structures and processes. Most significantly, young people acknowledged the value of having the freedom to participate, as they wanted, in essence, an 'opportunity space' for self-determined activity.

In many initiatives with young people, there is an assumption that adult involvement is controlling and oppressive and that young people should be left to get on with it themselves. Experience from this project suggests this is not always the case. In this project, young people talking openly about valuing the space to have more freedom and power but also the input of adults to 'keep them to task'. In one of the project meetings, the young people reflected on why they hadn't made much progress on the project. One of the young people said that in the youth council they are used to relying on the youth coordinator doing things for them. Of course, this could also be read as suggesting that through a more paternalistic approach they have been denied the opportunity to learn the skills that they need to work in a more self-directed way.

One of the roles for adults in supporting young people is in providing access to resources to enable young people's participation. Another role of adult professionals that emerged from their study was an acknowledgement of the knowledge and expertise that adult professionals might provide that can be used as a resource to support youth participation.

The experience of the young people in this project revealed that adult roles when young people participate are not just about power and coercion but instead there is a more nuanced set of issues playing out between the extremes of control and freedom. One of the young people raised the issue of different interpretations of independence suggesting that there does not have to be independence in the details to enable independence in the broader respect of ideas.

The social interactions and being together whilst 'participating' in this project were important for the group. In addition, it is clear that interaction, discussion, dialogue, challenging each other etc. are key to their participation on the project as much as the instrumentality of seeking to make something happen. In interaction within the group it was interesting to observe the 'learning' that went on as part of the participatory process – informing decisions, but also the young people developing a better understanding of what the reality of participation (in the sense

of active involvement in bringing about change) might involve and the wider ethical and rights issue. The interactions within the group revealed that the whole process of participation involved a creative and interactive process of experiential learning with ideas for the project emerging out of dialogue and interaction.

In summing up what they had learned about what participation involves each young person was invited to offer five words to capture what they had learnt. These were the responses:

- Awareness, respect, communication, validity, youth
- Unity, objective, resources, vision, communication
- Engagement, learning, experience, motivation, cooperation, sense of purpose
- Active involvement in local community
- Making change, teamwork, making connections, networking, learning never ends
- Enlightening, cyclical, validity, faith (in humanity), commitment
- Time

The young people did manage to complete a project and to produce a pamphlet giving advice and information, and a film about identity and homelessness. Manchester Young Researchers also have plans for future work with policy makers.

Finding solutions to social problems: Zürich: Girls Group

Context of the Girls Group

The Girls Group consisted of four girls who frequently met at a community youth centre in Zürich, especially during their free time on Wednesday afternoons and Friday evenings. The girls were between 11 and 12 years old, and attended to the 5th or 6th year in primary school. Since there was neither a formal structure nor any concrete goals or aims for them being together, the group can be described as a peer-group or an informal group.

The Girls Group's ARP aims and process

Before the Partispace researchers' first meeting with the group, the girls were asked by a youth worker at the community centre if they were interested in conducting a video project in the context of the AR. The girls were very interested in such a project, and explored ideas around the topic of 'sexuality and the body', but in the end they found the subject too personal for a video documentation. Instead, they chose bullying as the topic of their ARP. They said that this was something that concerned them all, they had heard a lot about it, and had some experiences from it in their own surroundings. Their common opinion was that bullying is a 'no go', 'should not be' and therefore 'should stop'. The four girls expected that bullying may be not be as prevalent among adults as among young people. As such, they assumed that adults might be less informed about it.

After initial discussions, the group formulated a twofold aim with their ARP – on one hand they wanted to broadening their knowledge about bullying by gathering more information, and on the other hand, they wanted to do preventive awareness work, where they would bring more public attention to the presence of bullying in wider society. They also wanted to provide

information or to ‘give lessons’ to perpetrators about the severe consequences for bullying victims.

All through the ARP process, the group got support from the Partispace researchers and two youth workers from the youth centre. Due to the upcoming summer holiday when the youth centre closed, the interviews and the analysis had to be completed within only four Wednesday afternoons. The girls were less interested in editing the video, and therefore the youth workers agreed to do this during the summer holiday.

Early on, the group decided to approach their research topic, by doing short street interviews. For this purpose, the girls developed six interview questions, which they wanted to pose to ten young people and ten adults. The interviewees could decide whether they want to be videoed during the interview or not. Those who did not had their responses recorded by audio only.

In all, the group conducted 15 street-interviews – eight with young people and seven with adults. Afterwards, they watched all of the interviews together and compared the answers with each other. During one of the reflection sessions, the girls collected words which they associated or connected to the topic. These words were then clustered to an image of the topic of bullying. The tight timetable and the intensity in the analysing process when comparing the interview answers of the young people and the adults, led to a drop of interest for the video project among the girls. According to the national report, this presented some interruption to an otherwise smooth AR process.

The Girls Group, the youth worker and the Partispace researchers had planned to watch the edited video together after the summer holiday followed by a final joint reflection of the AR process. However, at the defined date, only one girl showed up. Thus, the meeting was rescheduled to the following week. In the national report, the Partispace researcher concluded that the poor turnout and cancelled meeting indicates the ease with which the relevance of issues can change at this age, while the summer holiday affected the dynamic of the process.

Outcome of the Girls Group’s ARP

In the comparison of the answers from the interviews, the girls found, in contrast to what they initially assumed, that the answers of the adults and the young people did not differ very much, except in one aspect – the young people understood bullying more as a form of beating, such as physical violence, while the adults understood it more as a form of verbal or psychological violence. Another finding was that their former assumption, that young people were better informed about bullying than adults, was incorrect. To explain this finding, they assumed that some of the adults had more knowledge because they were parents, or knew children who had experienced bullying. Most surprising for the group, was the fact that some of the interviewees were not able to say anything about the topic of bullying at all.

Another question discussed during the joint reflection meeting was about how the girls should react to bullying and what they wanted to do about bullying. One girl answered that she now could fight more actively against bullying. The girls also concluded that they would inform a reference person like a teacher, a parent, a school social worker or a youth worker, and at the same time try to ignore the perpetrator. In addition, further possible approaches and actions were discussed, such as reporting the bullying incident to the police together with a parent or a

reference person. The young people also discussed the value of saving evidence - for example saving chat histories or taking screenshots, or in very severe cases, changing personal data such as phone numbers, chat names, profiles on social media or email addresses.

The Girls Group learned from the AR that many people do not know exactly what bullying is, how to address it. In this respect, explanations for, and preventions of, bullying are necessary. The group agreed that more information and preventive measures and actions should be taken, for example through a TV-series or a documentary, which could be shown to both adults and young people. The aim of the video would be to sensitise society for the topic. At the joint conclusion meeting, the girls developed the idea to send their edited video to different bullying information centres. Through that, they would strive to implement their own recommendation by asking for financial support for creating such a TV-series.

Finding solutions to social problems: Eskişehir: Youth Workers

Context of the Youth Workers

Youth work is a nascent occupation in Turkey. There is still considerable progress needed to make it a more developed practice field based on theoretical perspectives with connected work methods. The ARP started in the framework of a Partispace case study involving which young youth workers employed at a youth centre. During this, the young workers voiced a dissatisfaction with the general standing of youth work in Turkey, not least related to the lack of handbooks and guidance for a more professionalised practice. Most of the youth workers had received the training for their occupation from seminars and workshops, some of them organised from European level collaboration.

The youth centre serving as the starting point for the ARP had established just a few years previously. At start, the youth centre offered free courses in English, but since then several other activities were added related to themes such as personal/ self-development, professional development, charity work, youth rights, education, as well as leisure time activities. The centre was also a meeting place just to hang out at together with friends.

The Youth Workers' ARP aims and process

The ARP group consisted of eight youth workers under 30 years old, who intended to contribute to the practice field with a handbook on youth work written in Turkish. Through this, a wider goal was to provide a building block for a more profound foundation on which a process of an institutionalisation of youth work could be raised. The handbook was to be informed by theoretical and professional knowledge on youth work, using existing literature and also exploring knowledge among experts and other actors involved in the field.

The process started with the writing of a draft report sketching out the important subjects to be covered. The responsibility for the different chapters was dispersed individually within the ARP group. Responses to the draft were then supposed to come from a panel of experts. However, it turned out that only very few of these were returned so the group had very little help. Apart from lack of responses, the working process turned out to be problematic in other ways also. Varying writing styles and writing skills made it hard to compile a coherent text. Problems were further confounded with the different theoretical knowledge and practical experience of the authors.

The next and main step was undertaken in the form of a workshop to which interested people in the sector were invited. Results from the workshop were supposed to be merged into the different chapters of the handbook. An invitation was sent out and received quite a lot of interest (175 applications). Of these, 24 people were invited after a process which selected those likely to be able to contribute most fruitfully (and maybe some also for more personal reasons). The workshop was organised geographically quite far from Eskişehir, at a hotel by the sea in a district often used for similar event organised by NGOs. The choice of organising the event so far from there the group's base (the youth centre) was motivated by a belief that this could attract more people to come, and also that it could give the group experience in organising. In terms of age and education, the participants were predominantly university students with previous experience from voluntary work and civil society engagement especially from Social Service student clubs and Social Service university courses. There were both positive and negative results from the workshop. The participants were overall satisfied with both the venue and the programme and themes they were offered, but the hotel was unpopular because it lack enough space to facilitate the processes, There was also a dispute in respect to a person that first was invited to the workshop but was then turned down due to personal aspects.

Outcomes of the Youth Workers' ARP

The learning from this ARP were thematised in three ways

- Space, participation and organisation: the ARP group's choice of venue for the workshop could have been more considered. It was hard to organise the event that far from where they usually work, and the place itself did not have the facilities needed. However, they did actually carry the workshop through and the participants were mainly positive. This learning mostly reflects that doing AR also is about learning several different things and does not just related to the exposed or core learning of the primary aim, but includes several other, peripheral learning.
- Institutionalisation, inclusion and mentality: the project reframed the relations between the 'formal' researchers and the ARP group and in doing this, factors related to the ARP group's ordinary position became very obvious and sometimes problematic. The lack of institutionalisation and discretionary power in their ordinary organisation could have been a hindrance to demand for more resources. Help from the research team alleviated the process.
- Power, positionality and representation: the lack of experience of AR within the research team made this ARP a learning enterprise for the Partispace researchers. Even if the intention to establish more equality than in 'traditional' research approaches, different positions in hierarchical status may have threatened the process. In this project, the geographical distance, especially when it came to the workshop, could have been of help in some ways to balance this traditional power structure making the ARP group more in control of the working process than potentially could have been the case otherwise if the distance was shorter.

ARP aims: Peer activation and engagement

The final grouping of ARPs according to their starting aims were ARPs that wanted to focus on encouraging and supporting young people to engage in participatory activities and to tackle barriers to their participation.

Peer activation and engagement: Zürich: Political Youth Association

Context of the Political Youth Association

The main aim of the Political Youth Association is to be ‘the voice of the youth’ of the canton of Zürich – in relation to the parliament, government and public in general. The Association also aims at becoming a regional youth parliament. To be a platform for exchanges of political views, they arrange a variety of projects where members and other interested parties are given an opportunity to broaden their political knowledge and competence. The Political Youth Association is a well-established party-politically independent organisation, and it is part of a broad network of other political youth organisations and adult politicians.

The Political Youth Association's ARP aims and process

At the time of the ARP, the Political Youth Association had 35 members. A smaller group of members, mostly board members, were very active and committed to the cause of the Association. They were all aged 18 to 22, and fairly well-educated. The rest of the members were more ‘passive’ and regarded as ‘missed resources and potentials’ by the board members. The board members were all busy with the business of the Association so an ‘activation’ of the passive members would have been a potential source of relief. This would also have ensured the continuance and succession of the Association, as the roles of board members and the membership were bound to a certain age.

As the overall purpose of their ARP, the group wanted to increase the level of activity of the passive members. Based on this, four board members formed an ARP group and they formulated the following research question: How can ‘passive’ members be turned into active members, or, how can a commitment of these ‘passive’ members be stimulated?

They decided to approach this question in two modes – through a member survey, and by organising a barbeque event for all members. In this way, they hoped to talk with passive members, increase knowledge about why those members were in the Association, and explore the issues that interested passive members and that might engage them more actively.

The ARP ran from May to September 2017. The ARP group divided into two subgroups to approach the different forms of investigation. Three members of the survey group used a short questionnaire and made personal phone calls to the passive members. The answers were documented by hand. The way of reaching out to the passive members turned to be challenging as the board members had to ‘overcome themselves’ to get in contact. Furthermore, the passive members were difficult to reach. Although the phone survey required a lot of time, in the end the board members managed to reach all members, and could map their needs and interests.

Two of the board members started planning for the barbecue, and invited members as well as sympathisers of the Political Youth Association. The barbecue is an annual recurring Political Youth Association event and is about informal social exchange rather than the customary

political discussions. Since the attendance at the 2016 year barbeque was poor, the board members aimed to develop a more attractive proposal in 2017. To increase the availability, they chose a central park as the location for the event, and to find a suitable date they sent out a doodle survey. The passive members were all invited during the phone survey. The group also planned to do short member interview at the barbeque, and to document the event by taking pictures. The event took place in June and included the Partispace research team. In all, 15 people attended, which was an increase in the number of guests who came in 2016. After introducing themselves to each other, the informal chat was mixed with interviews of the passive members about their preferences and willingness to increase their engagement in the Association.

Outcome of the Political Youth Association's ARP

Learning from the phone survey and barbeque interviews was compiled and analysed at follow-up reflection meetings with the Partispace researchers. The phone survey turned out to be an opportunity for the board members to get in contact with their members and to introduce the Association in a more personal way. The board members also learned that, unlike the active members who were engaged in the Association initially through personal contacts or direct requests, most of the passive members had just 'bumped into' the association through word-of-mouth or social media. The survey also indicated that the passive members were younger than first thought and that most of them had other activities and engagements and did not wish to expand their engagement in the Association. To them, the Political Youth Association was primarily a platform for information exchange about various political topics, and a way to gain basic knowledge about the processes and procedures of the Swiss political system. From the barbeque interviews, the board members learned that many members wanted regular information about Political Youth Association activities through a newsletter or the like.

This information prompted the board members to conclude that their previous ideas about the reasons behind the low activity of the passive members were not accurate. It also led to a number of proposals of measures to better meet the wishes of the passive members. By doing this, the board members hoped to stimulate the passive members to take a more active part in the Association.

The findings made the board members realise the importance of face-to-face relations in terms of encouraging active engagement in voluntary organisational settings. Accordingly, one proposal was to make a welcome phone call to all new members in order to, as well as welcome them to the Political Youth Association, they could ask new members about their needs from the Association. A further proposal was email contact with new members with a presentation of the Political Youth Association's activities and the different working groups, with an invitation to register to a specific working group directly. Another proposal was to arrange 'politics crash courses' for younger members, in collaboration with another youth politics organisation. Other ideas was to design a flyer about the Association to hand over to all new members to increase the Political Youth Association's presence on social media, to write newsletters with information about the Association, projects, upcoming events and the working groups, and to create an annual program, so that Association members would be informed in good time dates of the activities.

Peer activation and engagement: Plovdiv: Party Youth Section

Context of the Youth Party Section

This group was established in 2009 when local branches of the Party were set up in all major Bulgarian cities. It is a successor to various attempts to construct a youth wing of the Party since the democratic transformation in 1989, all of which proved to be unsuccessful due to internal splits and quarrels as well as discontent of young members themselves and the often invasive interventions of Party leadership in activities and the course of action. The Party Youth Section has a relatively well established presence in the Party organisation. It includes some 35 members, most of them women, and most between 25 and 27 years. In terms of social background, the majority are lower middle class with a few from socially marginalized groups. Professionally, university students are dominant. The Party Youth section follows guidelines for action formulated biannually at the Party's national conferences, but also has considerable freedom in elaborating and realising everyday initiatives. The funding for the Youth Party Section is centralised and provided by the national leadership's budget, but often there are additional resources.

The Youth Party Section's ARP aims and process

The group was chosen for the AR for several reasons: its relatively constant functioning over the years; its experience in organising and conducting various campaigns; and its awareness of formal mechanisms for data analysis and assessments of results. The setting up of the project also coincided with the campaign for the presidential elections in Bulgaria during which there was an increase in mobilisation and enthusiasm of participants.

The Youth Party Section clarified and agreed the idea for their ARP together at a series of meetings. In this case, there was no shift of the initial focus but rather an adding of new aspects and tasks. The young people did not engage with a step-by-step planning but rather followed a general design when they were conducting the study. It was briefly decided that the project would be divided roughly into two parts, one including individual interviews with young people on the issues of youth apathy and political participation, and the other devoted to group discussions with differently 'profiled' young people in order to gather opinions on participation and involvement from different youth groups.

Outcomes of the Youth Party Section's ARP

There are four main learning points from the ARP:

- The video films showed how young people could achieve serious results if they have the opportunity and the importance of being open to different forms of participation.
- Youth policy sections and municipalities do not seem to be aware of young people's realities and aspirations.
- Projects such as this provide opportunities for 'real' citizenship education for young people through learning what it means to devise a proposal for change in the city.

- As a result of engagement in the project, young people shifted from being critical of politics and ready to emigrate to a situation where they actively sought to change the way politics is done in the city and the country.

Peer activation and engagement: Rennes: Partirennnes

Context of Partirennnes

The context for this project was the Master's degree programme in Childhood and Youth: Policies and Care in Rennes. The aim of the programme is to train current professionals and future professionals to promote improvement in the integration and management of young people, and to train future researchers interested in working on youth issues. The majority of students are around twenty years old. Some of them have experienced difficulties in their schooling and one aim of the programme is to enable access to higher education. The programme methods are based on collective dynamics and active pedagogy. Students are encouraged to be proactive in directing their own studies.

Partirennnes's ARP aims and purpose

The Partispace project was an opportunity to work on the concept of participation with these future youth actors. The pedagogical intention was to deconstruct discourses and practices aimed at young people. This AR was based on a pedagogical framework developed from a collaborative construction between teacher researchers and students involved in their own training. The initial research question was: what does the term 'youth participation' include?

The project began with a group exploration of the meaning of participation, followed by the planning of research methods. These were based on activities planned as part of the Partispace ethnographic case studies in Rennes: the mapping of participatory organisations and activities, production of a video and formation of a local advisory board. The students engaged directly in these research processes, in collaboration with members of the Partispace team. The group working on the video conducted street interviews with young people in the public space, asking them about what the city offered to young people like them. The mapping group aimed to extend the mapping process to include a variety of self-organised groups. The advisory board membership was extended to include a range of young people, and the students researched and developed group animation techniques to support their participation.

Outcomes of Partirennnes's ARP

The students' commitment and contribution to the work were evident – although this tended to fade in the latter stages because of other demands on their time. They were able to act as spokespersons for the project in a variety of settings. The video was a useful tool, and has already been used in training.

There were some issues around the role of the professional researchers as pedagogues or facilitators, and the appropriate level of support and direction for the students, which was a learning opportunity and a challenge for everyone.

Peer activation and engagement: Rennes: L'Epreuve

Context of L'Epreuve

'L'Epreuve' is an association established in 2007 with the aim of promoting youth engagement and inter-cultural dialogue. 'ALAB' is a project of L'Epreuve created in 2014 to address a gap between the aspirations of young adults and what is offered to them by formal institutions, in particular the lack of visibility and representation of young people in the design of public policies. ALAB is an artistic and cultural discovery programme that aims to create a space for participation and expression for young people between 18 and 30 years old. It describes itself as a semi-directive evolving framework, working towards gradual appropriation by the young people of the project and a final outcome being the drafting of a 'popular order' (equivalent to a specification sheet for local municipal services). The association already had good contact with members of the Partispace team in Rennes, and asked them to assist in planning and evaluating the work.

L'Epreuve's ARP aims and process

The objectives of L'Epreuve were to:

- gather a group of 25 young people between 18 and 30 years old, socially mixed as much as possible;
- train them for six months in decision-making processes, the project framework and two cultural activities chosen by the young people (the options being cinema, theatre, dance, fine art and music);
- support them in formulating a popular demand to be presented to local decision-makers in the area of local cultural policy for young people.

The role of the Partispace researchers was to assist in the real-time evaluation of the project, through a monitoring committee composed of youth professionals, social workers, a technician representing the youth sector of the city, and members of L'Epreuve, along with the researchers.

The key stages of the L'Epreuve project were:

- Mobilisation and meeting with the participants
- Introduction of the young people to each other and appropriation of the workspace (supported by architects)
- Collective reflection using interactive workshops
- Refining the project and defining the problem researching the views of residents by means of a 'micro-sidewalk' in districts of the city
- 'Route and restitution' using dance, contemporary music, visual arts, photography, theatre, and cinema
- A public presentation of the project, based on internal and external evaluation by the Partispace researchers

The stages of the evaluation were:

- Meetings with young people interested or mobilised on the project
- Construction of the evaluation framework and indicators
- Completion of the internal evaluation centred on the methods of accompaniment and their perceptions by the participants
- Public presentation of the results of the evaluation with the team

Outcomes of L'Epreuve's ARP

This was an unusual project and did not quite fit a model of AR, in that the young people were co-leading an existing programme and the professional researchers led the research element. Nonetheless, perceived outcomes related to:

- 'Accompaniment' and autonomy – the coordinators took a close look at their attitude towards the young people and some readjustment in terms of 'distance' with the participants. Tensions arose between workers meeting the needs of young people for support and direction while also respecting and encouraging autonomy. These tensions were partially resolved by taking steps to 'integrate the concept of transition according to the path and the profile of individuals'.
- Participation – interviews and observations revealed frustration with the level of participation in the programme. Important decisions seemed to be made without young people's input. The researchers' presence made it possible to make some adjustments, specifically increasing young people's participation in committees and greater presence of coordinators in group meetings.

Practically, there were joint publications by the researchers with project staff.

2. 'Doing' action research

Chapters 1.1 and 1.2 oben set out some of the principles and approaches in the ARPs. Now that the ARPs have been described in some detail, it is worth exploring some of the experiences of 'doing' AR and what can be learned from reflections on the process.

Doing AR was unusual for many of the young people, and particularly those involved in the more formal spaces of participation. Many of the challenges were concerned with the young people agreeing on project aims, approaches and outcomes, the time commitment needed for the project, and seeing the projects through to completion (the desired 'outcome'). The thematic chapters of the report (chapters 3 to 5) explore many of these processes and challenges, and they are crucial for learning about young people's participation, but some of the challenges – particularly those faced by the Partispace researchers – are summarised here.

A crucial aspect of AR is the reflection that takes place throughout the process and learning about participation from an AR process. In Partispace, this learning was as much about the 'adult'¹ researchers exploring participation alongside the young people, as it was about the young people's learning that is the focus in the thematic chapters below. This section of the report therefore explores reflections from the Partispace researchers on doing AR and on learning about participation through the process of the ARPs.

Adult-led vs. youth-led action research

AR is a participative process of learning for change, involving both 'researchers' and 'participants', in an inquiry which emerges out of co-inquiry. While some projects followed this process, others involved the Partispace researchers enabling projects to be youth-led from the very beginning of the process, including conceiving of a project idea, formulating key questions and a project design, and making sense of the experience alongside 'adult' researchers. Many of these aspects of AR were present in the Partispace projects in different degrees. It is arguable that all of the ARPs were adult- and not youth-led projects because the Partispace project's aims and questions, and the 'adult' researchers, framed the context of, and provided the initiative for, the ARPs. Nonetheless, within these spaces, young people had the autonomy to lead their own projects and to develop their own ideas. Indeed, as part of any AR process, assumptions about contexts and starting points for projects are themselves part of the critical reflection and re-animation.

Therefore, the term 'youth-led' does not (necessarily) have to involve a project being initiated by young people. In some cases, Partispace researchers 'helped' young people in generating ideas (e.g. by providing guidance on potential themes and activities) while in others, projects emerged from negotiation between the Partispace researchers and young people within the constraints of the project. The analysis revealed that throughout the process young people took - more or less - the lead in the projects in terms of designing and carrying out the work and co-

¹ The term 'adult' is placed here quotation marks because of the often false dichotomy between young person and adult. The age group for the Partispace project is 15-30, yet all of the countries involved in the research have an age of majority of 18. As such, most of the young people who took part in the research were legally adults. In the word of one 'young person' in one of the partner cities: 'I am a young person, I am an adult' (said to a group of Partispace researchers in a social setting).

analysing the learning. Nevertheless, being selected and approached by the Partispace researchers as ‘candidates’ for an AR group structured the space and process of what could and should be led by young people and in what way (and the project acknowledges that that these processes of framing were influenced by an ‘adult’ ascription and expectations regarding involvement of different groups in an ARP). The Partispace AR also differed in the sampling process for the projects. A number (13) of the groups for the ARPs were selected in and from the in-depth ethnographic case studies (see Batsleer et al., 2017) while a smaller number (5) was selected separately. This means that on the one hand, not all 48 case studies were involved in the AR (implying a selection process) and on the other hand, some of the AR groups were not selected for an in-depth case study.²

Reflecting upon all of these processes has led to interesting learning for the Partispace researchers on doing AR with young people, both in terms of their roles in an AR process (see below) and the ways in which projects were set up. Above all, however, these issues should not be considered limiting; indeed the findings from the projects reveal significant learning about the dynamics of youth participation in different contexts.

Working together and making projects ‘work’

The fundamental principle of AR is that the participants at the core of the project are active in researching and making sense of their own realities. In Partispace, this process required young people to self-organise and shift into a space of self-determination in which they had the power to decide how they work and to what end. There was, thus, a democratisation of the research process wherein the ‘adult’ researcher was no longer the expert controlling the project but, instead, a supporter and enabler or facilitator of learning. Power is at the heart of participation and the shift in power relationships between ‘adult’ researchers and young people not only enables the research to thrive but also provides an opportunity for learning in itself. Hence, the challenge for the Partispace researchers in negotiating shifting power relationships is itself part of the AR process and offers an opportunity for learning in action.

In some of the groups, the role change for the Partispace researchers and young people led to difficulties with the Partispace researchers being able to clarify to young people what such a process involved. Researchers, then, had to forego their traditional position as expert or lead and instead pass the responsibility to young people to decide on a project focus and design and how to begin a project. One Partispace researcher said:

It is easier when action comes from young people. The risk is to be dominant in the process. [I am] not comfortable between pedagogical approach and action research. With students, the process is different. Where young people are approached, it is different. (Researcher reflection, Consortium meeting, Germany)

Starting the projects and keeping them moving forward involved continuous (re)negotiation and collaboration between young people and the Partispace researchers. AR is not a prescribed

² One of the ARP groups - Hidden - explicitly declined being part of the ethnographic case studies because that methodology was not part of their practice as an organisation which incorporates PAR into all of its work.

process but, rather, experimental and emergent, and allows for projects to evolve experientially and creatively as participants learn and reflect in and on action.

Similarly, the Partispace researchers were unsure about the extent to which they should intervene with projects as they were ongoing. While they were aware of their role as co-researchers and facilitators, they were also conscious of the project's need for the timely completion of the ARPs and project deadlines. As such, while the Partispace researchers' role was to learn about participation alongside the young people, a number also struggled with when and if they should intervene with a floundering project. For example:

Young people can have 'unrealistic' aims [...] researchers try to say, 'it is too big to achieve', but they didn't want to listen, they then made plans but were not able to realise them. [...] How should we respond as adult researchers? Young people come to us for advice [...] when should we intervene and when not? (Researcher, Consortium meeting, Germany)

This ambivalence about the Partispace researcher role was, potentially, a result of assumptions that AR with young people should be solely youth-led and therefore free from adult intervention. However, these assumptions were also concerned with unsettling the delicate shifts in power that the Partispace researchers and young people had created together. Another reflection by a Partispace researcher illustrates this struggle: 'It was an equal relationship so we couldn't say 'that isn't good'.' (Consortium meeting, Germany)

What is the 'action' in action research?

AR is generally understood as an integrated and dynamic process of learning for change. A further challenge for the Partispace researchers was around the meaning of 'action' in AR and what any outcome should 'look like' at the end of an ARP. This uncertainty is illustrated in the following quotes from conversations in the consortium: 'Are we researchers or we are activists? We are not and cannot be both.' 'Is this youth work or action research? What are we doing? [I] feel uncomfortable [...] complicated mix of roles'. (Researchers' reflections, Consortium meeting, Germany)

For many of the Partispace researchers, the ARPs involved working alongside the young people to realise the projects and to achieve some kind of action or change. However, this too brought about conflicts in the researchers' role.

[We need] to think about our position as researchers. Emotional labour, how I am researcher, citizen, activist, what am I in this space? What do young people think about the researcher? Can we bring about change? It is important to be supportive about project. (Researcher, Consortium meeting, Germany)

A number of the Partispace researchers also talked about feeling 'uncomfortable about their role and the expectations on them.' (Researchers, general discussion). To some extent, the discomfort that researchers had in doing AR was to do with experiencing first-hand the ambiguities and injustices of young people's struggles for participation. Reports of the ARPs

therefore often include reflections from researchers about how their own thinking and practices have been challenged:

Maintaining young people's momentum

Once projects had started, there was sometimes a need for the Partispace researchers to maintain momentum. In some groups, momentum waned at different times, either because of young people's other commitments or because of the natural unfolding of the project, or when the project might reach a hiatus for different reasons. One of the reasons that emerged for some projects fluctuating was the dynamics of the group and the extent to which young people were able to maintain their own momentum in the projects. In some cases, maintaining momentum in young people's projects was about finding a democratic process of shared responsibility; in others, it was notable that one young person often emerged as a 'natural' leader in the group, seeking to organise and coordinate and maintain group progress. In many ways, this role mirrored the role of adults in participation. Whilst these roles largely continued, they did so with periodic challenges from other young people pursuing their own desire for greater power and responsibility at different times of the project process, often in connection with different activities and role requirements of the project. As with occasions when young people participate with adults, within young people's groups, there are also differing group dynamics at play concerned with dealing with different ideas and value positions and individual 'struggles for recognition'.

A further issue that emerged for many projects was time. Although the young people were often committed, active and motivated to make time to 'participate', most also had many other commitments in their lives including exams, other participatory activities and, in some cases, urgent matters such as applications for citizenship, survival and the challenges of everyday life.

However, because AR is an experiential learning process, there is no set ending. It can be difficult for the 'adult' researchers to know when the research has finished. This, too, was reflected in the researchers' discussions:

How many times we had to revisit cycle and how many times we could have revisited. [...] it could have gone on forever [...] (Researcher, Consortium meeting, Germany)

This issue is also, potentially, part of the challenge of young people having a greater degree of power and control in the process, as it can mean that adults have to relinquish control of a process that still, for them, has deadlines and expectations.

Whose knowledge is action research?

An underlying implicit assumption of increasing young people's participation is that they will benefit from a sense of more equal, shared, inclusive and active citizenship. One challenge that arose in this research was around whose knowledge emerges from the AR and what young people take away. In keeping with the collaborative nature of AR, knowledge is co-created and therefore jointly owned. In the ARPs where a spirit of co-production was more evident, there was a greater degree of shared learning. For some projects however, young people tried to meet what they thought were the researchers' expectations rather than pursue their own interests.

In addition, some of the Partispace researchers felt conflicted about leaving the project and 'taking the learning' with them. That is, while the Partispace researchers were committed to making the research empowering and enabling for the young people, they were also often aware that there remained an element of 'extraction' in the research. As one researcher noted:

'We say that we will be inclusive and empowering but at the end of the project, I am the one leaving with the data' (Researcher, Consortium meeting, Germany)

Indeed, these and other ethical issues were a source of discomfort to the Partispace researchers throughout the project. Nonetheless, working with the young people on the ARPs indicated that they gained from the experience in a number of ways (see thematic chapters and learning below).

2.1. Ethical issues in action research

Participatory AR brings its own distinctive ethical challenges. This kind of research does not fall neatly into discrete stages of proposal, design, data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination, as is often assumed with other types of social research. The distinction between ('adult') researchers and ('young') participants tends to be blurred, especially when the professional researchers may have their own research questions which can differ from those being pursued by the young action researchers. The extent to which different agendas are negotiated therefore becomes an ethical issue. Young people are often subject to a degree of control or accountability to external gatekeepers (such as youth workers or social workers), and if they are under 18 years there may also be a question of parental consent. All of these issues arose in the various projects reported here.

For example, in one city, all three groups involved in the AR were embedded in external organisations with their own particular ethos and expectations, and these contextual factors impinged very directly on how the projects were initiated, agreed and conducted. In one case, the parent organisation was experiencing tensions over its basic aims and objectives, which involved both the representative of the host organisation and the young people taking part. In another, there was an existing ethos around participatory AR and expectations of user involvement, which had to be negotiated (and were, successfully). In a third, the leading youth worker was highly conscious of accountability to the parent organisation, which at times had to be challenged tactfully by the young people and the Partispace researchers, in order to maintain consistent contact and to ensure that the young people had sufficient freedom to carry out their project.

In most, if not all, of the projects issues of confidentiality and anonymity were at times difficult. The expectations of the funder in this respect did not always fit well with the young researchers' desire for their work to have a public profile, resulting in some contortions in how to refer to the projects and groups in reports and other outputs.

Another further issue considered in some of the national reports concerned working with AR with vulnerable groups (e.g. the homeless). For example, the Partispace researchers involved in one project reflected: 'Although parts of the process were empowering there was also a sense

that the experience made the men acutely aware of their own powerlessness' (ARRM, p.6). This potentially implies the limitations of AR in relation to groups who are socially excluded and, potentially, low on different forms of capital. Equally, AR is about people engaging with their own realities as part of the process. This may result in substantive change, depending on how the project is established, but it is not a starting point or assumption of AR, and these projects must be contextualised

There is no straightforward linear account to be given of how the issues and challenges explored in current section arose and were handled by the team. The Partispace researchers were constantly reminded that research ethics cannot be simply prescribed and followed as a set of predetermined rules, but have to be grounded in context, practice and human relationships. The AR was more or less of a learning process for all the country teams, and it is to their credit that all of these 18 projects were delivered successfully and that the participant researchers (if we may call them that) were generally proud of what they produced and satisfied with the process, at least in the short-term of the work.

Finally, a note on pedagogy

Discussion of the role of the worker (or 'adult' researcher or professional advisor) brings into play the complex question of *pedagogy*. Is it helpful to situate these actors as pedagogues, and to consider their work with the young people in terms of pedagogy? One difficulty is that the concepts of pedagogue and pedagogy have different meanings in different (national, disciplinary or historical) contexts (see glossary entry on education). It can be seen as didactic, with the pedagogue being someone who knows what the child (*paidos*) or young person needs to learn – or as facilitative, where the emphasis is much more on creating an environment in which young people can find out for themselves what they want to learn. This leads us to the 'paradox of pedagogy' (Lovlie, 2016) – the contradiction between wanting young people to think freely for themselves and controlling the structure and approach within and with which they do that. In the case of these ARPs, it may be more instructive to focus on the mutual learning which took place, where both the young researchers and the professional advisors were working in a new space unfamiliar to both parties, and in which they learned in interaction and to some extent in interdependence. In AR, learning and action is emergent and the result of co-inquiry involving both the professional researchers and young people, but with roles of different parties negotiated according to the particular context. In reality, the extent to which power is genuinely shared may vary according to particular situations.

2.2. The analysis of learning and key themes from the ARPs

Section 0 oben set out the 18 ARPs grouped according to their starting aims. Chapters 3 to **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** will explore some of the learning about participation which emerged from the ARPs.

The learning from the projects in the national reports indicated that, in the 'doing' of the projects, many of the ARPs evolved and developed their starting aims in different ways through the AR process. None of the projects altered their aims completely; nonetheless, the analysis of the projects suggested that the learning from the projects was 'clustered' along themes that did not match the grouping above directly, in that the issues identified for closer inspection

were more or less manifest in many of the projects, regardless of our initial classification. The analysis, therefore, explored the following themes:

- *On the margins of citizenship* - this is about making claims for social justice, addressing perceived inadequacies of formal state citizenship in terms of civil, political, social and cultural rights, or struggles of various kinds rooted in personal experiences and lived realities, or expressions of 'voice' and identities from the margins. Many of the projects here were concerned with these issues to a greater or lesser extent.
- *Change-making and activism* – this is about groups' efforts to make a change of some kind to their own (individual or collective) circumstances, their cities, or the wider community and society. The change-making here was in general terms socio-political, including raising awareness or consciousness and generating dialogue about personal, collective and social issues, building knowledge and understanding about issues, or practical change-making, in groups or cities. This theme is concerned with collective action, 'making democracy' and a sense of 'doing differently'.
- *Roles and relationships: identity and positioning* - here the learning is concerned with relationships and groups' understandings of themselves as a group within an AR context. The analysis uses conceptions of discursive order and subject positions, and addresses questions such as, who is a member? Who is a peer? Who is a counterpart? The analysis explores varying relationships to institutional structures – characterised here as 'close', 'loose' and 'autonomous'

It is important to note that the three themes are present in many of the ARPs and that the themes themselves overlap in some ways (for example, some of the projects which addressed issues of citizenship and rights did so through an activist campaign). There are other themes that would also merit further exploration – for example the importance of recognition as 'love, rights and solidarity', and of experiences of misrecognition, in the work of these groups, and what that tells us about youth participation more generally (Honneth, 1995; Thomas, 2012; see also Partispace Glossary). Nonetheless, the three thematic approaches together enable a rich exploration of the theoretical learning from these projects that helps to answer Partispace's central research questions about the styles and spaces of young people's participation. Each of the thematic chapters draws on particular examples from the ARPs that best illustrate these themes. The following chapter begins this analysis with the theme 'on the margins of citizenship'.

3. On the margins of citizenship³

Several of the ARPs within Partispace cast light upon some of the current plights of Europe: the growing economic inequalities between different categories of citizens, social polarization, and escalating racist sentiment towards ethnic minorities fuelled by populist right-wing parties represented in almost every national parliament. This dominant, political framework illuminates the class based, spatial and ethnic fragmentation of the multicultural city in which citizenship practices of young people evolve (Dikeç 2007; Tesfahuney & Ek 2016). This omnipresent narrative solidly rests on a well-established dramaturgy powered by the dynamic tension between inclusion/exclusion, and belonging/wanting to belong. Consequently, the growing social and economic inequality which is depicted in the polarisation of urban space, has tangible implications for young people and their life opportunities, possibilities to claim citizenship rights, future dreams, ambitions, plans, and relations to the societies in which they live. Besides being a set of formal rights and duties (civil, political and social) (Isin & Wood 1999), citizenship, as ‘the participatory dimension of belonging to a political community’ (Yuval-Davis 2011: 46), has also to do with practices (cultural, symbolic and economic), as well as provision of substantial means necessary to enable active engagement in society. Citizenship defines and marks out individual and group’s membership in society, meaning that young people with different backgrounds and different kinds of resources and access to resources, participate in different ways.

There are great variations between the projects that will be examined in this chapter, in terms of the specificity of national and city contexts, the composition and inner dynamics of the particular groups, participant backgrounds, and the lived experiences of the individuals in relation to which the ARPs are framed. However – The Box, Hidden, Manchester Young Researchers, the Islamic Youth Association, and the Solidarity with Refugees, are at the same time projects which share couple of central characteristics which make them suitable for comparative analysis.

First of all, all of the projects are making claims for social justice. In various ways, all projects contest the current frameworks of youth participation, emerging as self-initiated actions responding to the perceived inadequacies of formal state citizenship and the lack of civil, political, social and cultural rights commonly associated with it (Yuval-Davis 2011). By doing so, they are critically interrogating the inequality-producing power structures, addressing issues of marginalisation, from Manchester to Bologna, to Eskisehir. Second, all of the projects portray struggles of various kinds, which are rooted in young people’s personal experiences, and which communicate lived realities of individuals and groups. And third, these common characteristics place the projects on the margins of full citizenship and citizenship rights; from that position, they are addressing a citizenship deficit, a defined lack of recourses, recognition, and entitlement. Young people in these particular projects are raising voice for social justice, against inequality, racism and invisibility. The methods are similar: primarily it’s not about organisation and political action directed towards power structures and the mechanisms which

³ Throughout this report, the national reports (upon which most of this comparative report is based) are referred to as Action Research Report (ARR) and the city’s initial: ARRB (Bologna); ARRE (Eskişehir); ARRF (Frankfurt); ARRG (Gothenburg); ARRM (Manchester); ARRP (Plovdiv); ARRR (Rennes); and ARRZ (Zürich).

produce divisions, the projects are much more modest and from the perspectives of the young people, realistic – it's about voicing, displaying and raising awareness for personal and collective issues, experiences and struggles.

We start by looking at the main problems and issues the project groups in the different cities have identified and chosen to research. The ARPs and main issues: Manchester, Bologna and Eskisehir

3.1. Addressing youth homelessness

The Box, an arts-based charity in Manchester, is an organisation which utilises creative methods when working with young, homeless men whose everyday lives are characterised by alcohol and drug addiction, criminality, and mental health problems. The project has its background in the significant increase of youth homelessness during past couple of years, which is due to austerity politics like sustained cuts to welfare and restricted access to state-administered housing support. This situation has resulted in the formation of homeless 'camps' around the city, and an increase in forcible evictions of the homeless in occupied public spaces. Against this background the members of *The Box* decided to dedicate their ARP to exploring and presenting personal realities and experiences of being homeless. The main aim of the project was to raise awareness on the problem of homelessness through personal stories and experiences. The members created an art installation consisting of wooden boxes which were placed around the city. The boxes portrayed experiences and feelings related to homelessness: issues of privacy and personal hygiene, mental health, drug addiction, and struggles connected to finding a place to sleep. The men led four walking tours, informing members of the public affiliated with *The Box* about the plights of their living conditions.

Manchester Young Researchers is another Manchester based ARP. Due to the manifested prevalence of the problem in the city, the young members of the Manchester Young Researchers also chose to address the issue of youth homelessness. Even though focus of the two researchers in this project was more directed towards the participatory practices of the group and less on the topic of homelessness itself, the choice of the topic is however illustrative as for what the group found to be emergent and pressing and in need to be addressed.

Characteristic for this group was the level of ongoing reflection in relation to the complex problem they chose to focus on. Their active engagement with the issue was followed by evolving and emerging discussion and critical thought. The group constantly challenged each other, asking whether there really was something they could do about youth homelessness:

M: Homeless research has already been done.

R: So what can we do?

H: Things to alleviate... improve the situation.

D: It's important to be clear what this will involve and not biting off more than we can chew. We don't want to be seen that we are engaging in something we can't deal with.

H: We could get a think tank together. Exploring what the issues are and how we can respond.

R: So what are we actually going to do? (Young people, ARRM, p23)

Further, when discussing about finding focus for the project, and what a realistic response to youth homelessness might be, the group considered issues such as whether they should frame the project as research or a campaign. They also tried to understand what had previously been done in Manchester and what was already happening, including the duties of the city council and what kind of support is offered to young homeless people by the city administration. In order to learn more, the young members of the Manchester Young Researchers researched causes behind youth homelessness, seeking for ways of addressing the complex issue. Questions raised had to do with whether they should use affiliates or not, or if they should involve homeless people. Eventually, the aims of the ARP were formulated in the following way:

- To capture the views and experiences of homeless people in order to educate other young people (for example in schools) about the struggles of homelessness
- To make a short film capturing the views and experiences of young homeless people
- To produce a resource booklet to help support young homeless people in search of help

The group wanted to inform the wider public about the issue of homelessness, this point was important from the start. Throughout the project they discussed possibilities for organising some kind of public event, to inform and show to a general public what it means to be young and homeless. The group talked about projecting their film about youth homelessness on the side of a city building so that the public could see. The group also discussed ideas of a project launch with key city officials present, and a dialogue with city officials.

Activism, education and dialogue to promote change were also crucial features of the ARP formulated by the Manchester Young Researchers. They interviewed young homeless people in order to learn more about the underlying problems of homelessness, reflecting upon how to address the problem as a group. At the same time, even though making an impact was a central aim of the project, the members of the Manchester Young Researchers also reflected upon the difficulties connected to bringing about change when it comes to complex social problems:

Youth homelessness is not a problem you can change overnight ... it's rather to like raise awareness and like provide resources. But we didn't want to just create something; we wanted to actually make a change and the pamphlet can actually make an impact on someone's life, even though it is not a big impact. Some of the organisations we have talked to say they want some for them and their clients, so they actually did want that. (Young person, ARRM, p29)

The Manchester Young Researchers wanted to respond to the immediate problem of homelessness by giving out the pamphlet to young homeless people and others at risk of becoming homeless, in order to enable them an easy access to help. The young people also saw the video and the pamphlet as educational resources, which could be used in schools to raise awareness about homelessness. Addressing the issue, 'getting it out there', was thus the

primary aim of the project. Ideas changed, but the group continued to explore ways for ensuring impact from the work they had done.

Even though their key method for bringing about change was about raising public awareness, the group at the same time continuously reflected upon the need for political solutions as well. Therefore, the group tried to organise an opportunity to meet with the city mayor and key officials, to talk about what they have done and possible ways forward in responding to youth homelessness. Despite some of the group members also being members of the Manchester youth council, they were aware of the actual lack of power and resources they possess. They perceived themselves as outsiders, having a realistic understanding about the power and influence they possess, which however didn't prevent them to work for impact and change. In informing their choices about what they should do, throughout the ARP the members of the Manchester Young Researchers demonstrated a high degree of reflexivity, discussing and choosing amongst realistic strategies in their framework of action.

3.2. Action research in the trails of migration

Today we live in the age of migration (Castles et al. 2013). Given that the number of forcefully displaced people in the world has never been higher, for many people the decision to migrate is not voluntary. According to a recent UNHCR report (Global trends, 2017) there are 65,6 million refugees in the world, due to war, conflict, persecution, violence and violations of human rights. Over the last twenty years the number of refugees has grown from 33 million in 1997 to 65 million in 2016, half of the refugee population being children. Migration flows, profoundly re-shaping and contesting traditional understandings of nation-state citizenship and belonging, thus contribute to the shaping of some of the ARPs in Partispace.

Hidden, a Manchester-based human rights organisation, works with people of different ages who are at risk of having their rights denied. As a 'frontline organisation' Hidden works with people facing challenges connected to lack of citizenship rights, housing, deportation, employment, education and personal safety. The organisation aims at empowering people that in several respects are marginalised. Participation is a core principle of the organisation's work. Members' voices and experiences are central in all of Hidden's work. Three young women and two men formed the group which formulated and followed through the ARP. At the time, all of the members were seeking leave to remain in the UK. Some had applied to the Home Office, others were in 'hiding', without application, undocumented. The young people in the ARP come from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan. In line with their backgrounds and personal struggles, their reflections about participation were rooted in their experiences of migration and feelings of marginalisation. When invited by the research team to reflect about participation, this group of young people were acutely aware of ways in which their possibilities to participate are severely circumscribed given their status as non-citizens of a nation-state. 'Universities do not take people like us', like one of the participants explained, being aggrieved that they can neither access higher education nor work, and that the mainstream institutions are closed to them. Their status (or in terms of citizenship rights lack of status) saturates their realities with feelings of existential insecurity, vulnerability, and being constrained:

[...] the uncertainty is like floating on the water [...] we might get rescued but it is a waiting game. (Young person)

[I'm in] prison, I can't do so many activities that I want to do. Still hanging around, I can't do anything, I'm helpless. (Young person) (ARRM, p10)

For this group of young people participation is about 'being listened to, being accepted, being treated equally', like Eleta phrased it. But being migrants and asylum seekers the group feels they are neither accepted nor respected. Thus, it is unclear what modes of participation the society really has to offer them. The young people are aware of their inferior status and extremely limited possibilities to participate, regarding all aspects of life. As another member of the group put it: 'a lot of people think they are higher status, hierarchy, you are an asylum seeker and I am not'. In relation to systemic barriers to participation, the group also discussed how being a person seeking asylum affected their daily lives. They feel targeted

I go [into] some shop, security looking, looking, and then around and then go back and they think, stolen something, I do not feel good inside. (Young person)

scared

When destitute [without an active application], I feel scared, fear. When destitute, I can see policeman, no problem, I can change my way, they wear the uniform. On the bus, sometimes stop, police get on, big men, I will feel OHHHHH, very scared. (Young person)

depressed

I am so sad, crying, every day crying. (Young person)

and humiliated.

Because I am different. I came with big courage, from my house, took the bus, thought, this is September, wear nice clothes, big hall for ESOL [registration], I say, 'let me go there'. I queued for one and a half hours [and was then declined]. All my courage, all everything, it goes down, I say, I was very shamed. (Young person). (All, ARRM, p11).

In addition, the group frequently mentioned that they feel embarrassed and ashamed to admit their status even to their friends. In the first focus group, they likened their daily lives to wearing a mask:

It's a bit like you wear a mask. One for outside and one for in college. The point is, one mask says you're here and you're one of them but when you take it off, you're an ordinary person, an asylum seeker. When you're wearing a mask, you can't open up. No one can tell I am an asylum seeker, I speak the same as they do, same accent, same music, they cannot discriminate against me. (Young person ARRM, p11)

Many in the group identified with this analogy and agreed that they play different roles depending on what is required from them in a certain space. From a micro-sociological, interactionist perspective, this public and private performance means that the young people often felt that they are hiding in plain sight; they are invisible. Or that their visibility (their 'real' selves) are continuously being challenged, which forces them to 'be' someone else, to 'wear a mask', like Uraif says. The group shares this general sentiment of participating 'on the margins', of non-belonging, of being a negation, being left out, being cut away from mainstream society. They feel as being positioned 'outside'; missing some of the basic conditions required to actively participate in society their life chances are narrow. The systemic, tangible barriers to participation are coupled with a knowing of being an 'other' and of being excluded from spaces, places and experiences.

It was these discussions and reflections about their feelings of marginalisation, in terms of participation, that started the group talking about what they would like to do together as an ARP. Rather than hiding from a society that stigmatises them, they decided to make their project revolve around the will to be included. Ideas for a project began to form and had to do with ways to interrupt their exclusion and raise awareness of their situation through depicting the lived realities of narrow life opportunities to others.

For the project, all of the young people wanted to produce something that would allow them to engage with the community in order to start a dialogue about the lives of young people seeking asylum. After a lengthy process the group eventually arrived at a starting point for the project they chose to call 'Faceless'. Some of the members of the group wanted to explore lived experiences of people seeking asylum through an artistic output. Another group decided to do a piece of writing each on what they felt was the most pressing issue in asylum seekers' lives. The members wrote about mental health issues, about not being allowed to work, not being able to be independent, and about not being able to access higher education.

The play *Faceless*, which builds on member's personal experiences of migrant subordination, explores the invisibility of asylum seekers. From the introduction of the play:

Someone sits alone, with a blurred face. Many people walk by without taking notice. Another stranger

walks by, but back-steps – confused.

Stranger: Am I seeing things?

(Approaches Faceless)

Stranger: Hello? Is someone there?

Faceless: I am... here.

Stranger: Who said that? I'm not – oh, I think I see you! Yes, I see you now!

Faceless: That's further than most can perceive.

Stranger: Why?

Faceless: We are mostly invisible to the average person; but see us, some can...some can.

Stranger: But why is this? Why do you make yourself invisible?

Faceless: We don't. Rather, it is you.

Stranger: (shakes head confused). I don't...

Faceless: Your society makes us invisible. It is because of your society that we fade into the background. (Except from play, ARRM, p13-14)

Together with the researchers the group rehearsed in Hidden offices and in various outside locations where they thought they might like to film the final version. They rehearsed and filmed outside of the doors of Manchester Central Library, which they thought was symbolic because it depicted the ‘other’ outside of one of Manchester’s most used and famous buildings. The group also filmed on a bench in a former bustling but now largely vacant and disused square in Central Manchester. The bench was located outside a former shop where the windows were empty and covered in paper. The desolation of this particular space was symbolic to the young people. The group also explored side streets in Manchester, some of which they thought were ‘very bleak’ and streets where they could find gates, which they thought represented their captivity and weariness. The group decided upon the bench outside the disused shop for the filming location. One of the group members also remarked that the square now seemed to be home to some of Manchester’s many homeless, who could also be the Faceless in the play. Eventually, due to bad weather conditions, the filming of Faceless was completed in Hidden’s office. In sum – in the Faceless project an interesting paradox arises: the young people, who feel invisible and unseen, are at the same time (by being migrants and asylum seekers) one of the most stigmatised groups in society.

The Islamic Youth Association is a non-political association focusing on issues of youth participation and youth promotion. The association was founded in 2001 by young members belonging to various Islamic groups. The Islamic Youth Association section of Bologna was founded in 2014. With its approximately 1200 members, the association involves exclusively young people between 14 and 26. It is led by a national managing committee and each local section has its president and board. Each branch organizes its activities independently, but during the year some joint events and actions are organized both at regional and national level. The main aim of the association is to promote inclusion and civic engagement of young Muslims in the Italian society, as well as intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Its activities focus on several topics: identity-issues and feelings of belonging to the second-generation Islamic immigrants, the relationship between nationality, place of living and faith, interfaith dialogue, the development and change of the Islamic culture and community in Italy and Europe, and the concept of trans-nationality and its daily implications. Related to these topics, each section promotes different kinds of activities, such as leisure events (trips, sport tournaments, festivals), seminars and discussions about Islam, and joint events with local and regional actors (members of associations, journalists, scholars and researchers). The association also takes part in interfaith initiatives and projects promoted by public and private institutions.

The Islamic Youth Association formulated and carried through an ARP of belonging constructed around the notions of religion, identity, and cosmopolitanism in a multicultural society. The Bologna research team decided to involve the Islamic Youth Association in action research because the members of the organisation represent a segment of the youth population that faces substantial difficulties to engage in youth participatory activities due to economic, spatial and ‘cultural’ exclusion that young migrants (and young people with migrant origins)

experience. The research team wanted to bring to the fore these forms of exclusion, as well as reflect upon the internal and external conflicts from the perspective of a minority. Focus in the ARP was put on how young Muslims living in Bologna deal with 'hybridity' and stigmatized religious identity. The research team also wanted to investigate how this group of young people participate through religion in a socio-political context in which their belonging to a Muslim community puts them at risk of being marginalised in various ways. During the ARP, many of the young members positioned themselves as having 'inner conflicts', they expressed feelings of living 'between two realities', not feeling Italian nor Arabic but simply 'different'. In relation to this, the activities of the Islamic Youth Association are about encouraging members to become active citizens. Personal responsibility, growth and learning are of central importance. The association offers a proper sociocultural context in which the members can develop an Italian/Islamic identity together with others, in a healthy and constructive way. Creativity and allegiance are put forward as the main attitudes that should characterize the activities and personal behaviour of the members.

During the ARP the members, through thematic workshops and other methods, actively engaged in exploring experiences and feelings of belonging and non-belonging. Here is Karima's story, a 19-year-old girl with Tunisian origins:

I have always been here in Italy, but I moved for a year to Tunisia, it was the first year of high school; I felt unease there. Because professors aren't keen on helping you as it is here, there wasn't a special need teacher for instance; even if I was able to read and speak Arabic, it has been very hard. My grades went from 0,5 to 3 in Arabic language. I managed to succeed and pass the year because of subjects like English, French, Science, etc. but it was still very hard to pass the year. Then I came back to Italy. When I came back, the second high school year has been very easy to me, Alhamdulillah; actually I got the best grades among my mates, without even working too hard. Instead, a place where I feel fine is the IYA, since I began here. I start to become active in the organization. I feel fine, because there are people I share my life and religious values with... and that's all. (Young person, ARRB, p8)

And here is Thomas' story, a 19 year old with Italian-German descent who converted to Islam and is now a vice-president of the association:

It was in summer, a very hot summer, I was invited to a brother's place and he offered me some watermelon [...] it has been my pre-Islamic period yet, I hadn't already done shahada [declaration of faith] and that day I told him – who made me enter in touch with the religion, Islam – that I wanted to do shahada, that I cared a lot about praying and becoming part of this religion, and he was very happy, because, he said, he already saw me as a brother. So I felt fine, comfortable, calm. A moment, instead, in which I felt uncomfortable: I was attending primary school, during math lesson – when I was a child I was much more shy than now, I'm still shy, but it was worst – I had to go to the whiteboard to solve a problem and I got completely stuck. I remember staying there for a lot of time, I was actually sweating... as I

recall that has been the most uncomfortable situation. But I can't remember how it ended, what happened then. (Young person, ARRB, p8)

And when the members discussed the content of a promotional video for the association the issues of belonging were present as well. Here is Tahir, a 17 year old with Syrian origins, talking about why he decided to attend the Islamic Youth Association:

Because for us (Muslims) living here in Italy – Italians have a completely different culture from ours' – it's a pleasure to meet with people who share the same culture... so there is a gap, they actually are two different worlds, and it's nice to meet among us, it's like feeling home. (Young person, ARRB, p19)

In terms of belonging, these accounts offer valuable insights into young people's everyday lives, about positive as well as less positive life experiences. Further, the topics most frequently discussed and explored by the young people had to do with a) places where they feel comfortable (e.g. the Islamic Centre and the Mosque) and 'uncomfortable' (e.g. schools) and which in various way hinder participation; b) the specificities related to negative experiences of forced periods of living abroad (family reasons, studying) which depend on parental decisions the young people do not always understand and share; c) the specificities related to socializing with friends with same religious beliefs and practices (no alcohol, no pork meat) which are different from the practices of non-Muslim peers, which in turn risks reinforcing an existing divide between groups.

During the ARP the group also explored different strategies of dealing with stereotypes. Some of the members made a video to account for their everyday life experiences as young Muslim girls in need of reacting to western concepts of veiled women as victims, as politically and culturally isolated and oppressed. For these girls, taking part in the activities of the Islamic Youth Association seemed to be a way of handling everyday stigmatization. Here is an excerpt from their script where they make fun of the frequent association between Islam, veiled women and terrorism:

Title of the sketch: #aren't you feeling warm?

Aida: What a heat! [to Leena, wearing the veil]. But, aren't you feeling warm all dressed like that?

Leena: What? [embarrassed]

Aida: [insisting] Aren't you feeling warm all dressed like that?

Leena: No, I feel fine.

Aida: Are you bold?

Leena: [doubting] Mmm... no...

Aida: And, another question: do you wear the veil at home?

Leena: Yes.

Aida: ...or that hanky, what is it called?

Leena: I think so...

Aida: What? Do you wear it at home!? But, were you born with the veil?

Leena: [confused] I don't know.

Aida: How, don't you know? But do you belong to Isis?

Leena: Wait a second, I will call and ask...

Aida: So, do you have the C4? Do you traffic bombs? Hey, she traffics bombs! (ARRB, p12-13)

Participation in Islamic Youth Association is by the young members primarily experienced as a personal journey. Participation in this particular ARP can be understood as a process of personal enrichment, a process of training and growing up, of individual fulfillment, planned, acted and achieved together with peers. The objective of participation, thus, is to improve oneself, to promote 'fair values', to find a 'balance' as an individual. Perhaps more than in other participatory contexts, the Islamic Youth Association stands for a forum where weakness is accepted: the very purpose of participating is to work to overcome weakness through the help of faith. In contrast from volunteering, activism or other forms of civic engagement, participation in Islamic Youth Association is not change-oriented, nor oriented towards the local community; it is mainly self-oriented. The ARP and the group's production of a video did not aim at social change, nor imply any form of social work in the neighborhood or the city. It was a process primarily dedicated to learning new skills and recruiting new members to the association. However, even if participation in the Islamic Youth Association to a large extent can be categorized as 'self-oriented', through their ARP the members at the same time addressed issues related to stigmatization, exclusion, racism and islamophobia. The ARP of the Islamic Youth Association can be understood as an ongoing negotiation of substantial citizenship, as participation in relation to societal prejudice as well as an attempt to fight stereotypes and islamophobia. As such, the project sheds light on the complexities of (hybrid) identity. It is connected to general discourses about belonging and ongoing patterns of migration and social tensions between majorities and minorities which are evident in all western societies with similar migratory patterns. In this ARP participation can also be understood as a 'coping strategy' in the transition process to adulthood, as a way of adapting to a societal context which relegates the Muslim minority – as well as other minorities – to the margins of belonging.

Solidarity with Refugees is the name of the ARP conceptualised by the Project Initiative, a group of young people in Eskisehir who organised a series of activities for refugees and migrants lacking citizen rights as well as resources to participate in various aspects of social life. PI consists of around 15 young individuals in Eskisehir, most of whom are university students with a critical understanding of the current political situation in Turkey. The group can also be characterised as a circle of friends who regularly hang out together. The project idea emanated from the everyday experiences of the PI members. The PI has a small flat in a city-neighbourhood where refugees from countries such as Iran, Iraq and Turkmenistan live together with local residents, including a student community. The members of the PI are used to encountering refugees in the streets, have interactions with those who own shops and restaurants, however, without being able to properly communicate. Against this backdrop they started to develop the idea to create a project to improve refugees' integration in Eskisehir. Today Turkey is a transit country for many refugees from the Middle East heading towards Europe, Canada and the USA. However, as a result of the EU-Turkey refugee agreement, refugees are not allowed to move further into Europe, which means their stay has in many cases

become more or less permanent. Along with Kayseri, Eskisehir is one of the two satellite cities to which refugees are sent. In order to leave the city, refugees need to acquire legal consent. The problems the PI identified amongst the refugee population had to do with language shortcomings, lack of knowledge about refugee rights, Turkish law regarding marriage, divorce and work, and issues related to sexual health and birth control methods. With an ambition to address these issues the PI organised a series of events called ‘Solidarity with Refugees’ which included classroom based work, workshops and entertainment/leisure events. The overall aim of the project was to contribute to integration of refugees in Eskisehir. Being a group of young people highly sensitive to social and political problems, but also reluctant to take part in formal settings of participation, the group planned and realised activities with a social and art-oriented character. Ahmet, one of the members, explains the main ideas guiding the initiative:

First, we wanted to conduct such a project because large number of refugees live in Istiklal Street where the initiative is located; they have their own workplaces and we have had regular interactions with those refugees working in cafés, restaurants, and so on, in the neighbourhood. Political discussions over refugees and separatist tendencies against refugees have given rise to unfavourable protests and discourses. That local and national media has created such a perception that refugees are a threat has led to a ‘them’ and ‘us’ situation between refugees and local residents. By looking for a possibility of reducing these separatist discourses or protests a little bit we had such aims to contribute to a healthy communication between local residents and refugees by increasing their interactions with one another. We wished to build a ‘neighbourhood solidarity’ in a sense specific to Eskişehir, to Istiklal neighbourhood [where the initiative is located] in a micro scale; to create such an atmosphere where refugees coming to a foreign country to escape war and political oppression of their own countries can improve their communication with local residents and tradesmen; to decrease local residents’ hate speech; to strengthen the ties of refugees with the city. (Young person, ARRE, p3)

3.3. Voices and identities from the margins

Part of the work of some of the ARP groups was about their expressions of voice (and their need to be heard and seen and recognised) from the margins and the identity work with which the young people, and groups, engaged, on the margins. Two groups (from the same city, Frankfurt), illustrate this well: the **Hoodboys** (a graffiti group), and the **Hip-Hop** group (a young hip-hop performance group).

The Hoodboys aimed to ‘create a dialogue in the form of a short movie between their lifestyle to bring both worlds – the major society and their group – together.’ (Researcher, ARRF, p2). Through this dialogue, the young people wanted to present their perspectives on the group’s activity (graffiti) which they believe is seen as vandalism and criminal. However, for the young people, ‘the practices connected to spraying and representing a crew are... identity-establishing’ (Researcher ARRF, p2). Through this project, the Hoodboys wanted to show the

public what the practice of graffiti, and group membership, means to group members. Importantly, *'for the graffiti sprayers, [graffiti] is a form of participation.'* (Researcher, ARRF, p3).

The group's graffiti is about 'styles' and 'tags' (spraying and drawing letters) and is a form of public self-expression: *'Graffiti gives us a way to represent ourselves. It's this special feeling when your pieces catch other people's attention.'* (Off-text for film, ARRF, p6) The members of Hoodboys, individually and collectively, engage in meaning-making of graffiti, as an art form:

Graffiti has a different meaning for each of us – and a different thrill. It doesn't matter how it is created, but in the end everyone can identify with a new piece. (Off-text for film, ARRF, p6)

Graffiti is also about (re)claiming space, being part of the (their) city, and being recognised there. The city is their canvas:

All in all we have been represented in the cityscape for almost 10 years. Empty buildings, sports areas and factories served us as playgrounds where we have developed our styles. [...] Graffiti in the public sphere causes a lot of commotion, because most people want their city to be clean. And they don't see why someone should run the risk and take the consequences. We always get excited when we walk around the city and see some pieces by our own guys. We have grown up in Frankfurt. This is our city. It is full of contrasts and thus gets alive. (Off-text for film, ARRF, p6)

In this sense, the ARP is about 'voices from the margins' and the graffiti artists' identity work, on the margins, particularly in terms of recognition as legitimate artists. The Hoodboys are clear that their identity is concerned with being an individual graffiti artist and being part of a group with shared interests in the art form. Their collective identity emerges several times during the ARP:

For us, graffiti is a crew matter. We stay among us, don't mingle with other crews too much. Graffiti has a different meaning for each of us – and a different thrill. (Off-text for film, ARRF, p6)

The short film that the group produced for the ARP is less about the individual sprayers than it is about exploring what it means to be part of the 'crew': *'the whole group consists of ten young men, all with different backgrounds, education and occupation, but with the shared interest on graffiti and the same understanding of it'* (Researcher, ARRF, p7). The researcher notes:

The social identity is connected on a shared basis of aspects of and for a certain group, which differentiates from other groups, while the personal identity refers to individuality and uniqueness based on the specific interplay of several 'identity pegs' (Goffman 1963: 72), which constitute the biography of a person. (ARRF, p7-8).

In this respect, *'every individual person represents the group while keeping [their] own style (Goffman 1963): the concept of social and personal identity.'* (Researcher, ARRF, p7) Differentiation from other groups, and identification with joint outputs, is central to the Hoodboys' collective identity. From the 'off-text' for the film:

'For us, graffiti is a crew matter. We stay among us, don't mingle with other crews too much. Graffiti has a different meaning for each of us – and a different thrill. It doesn't matter how it is created, but in the end everyone can identify with a new piece.' (Off-text for the film, ARRF, p6)

In addition, the group's identity is related to their commitment to graffiti as a subversive activity: *'Furthermore the crew has an illegal name which they spread all over the town and which is connected to representation and loyalty.'* (Researcher, ARRF, p7)

However, this position is also ambiguous, because the members of the group are also committed to maintaining their graffiti practice as a subversive form and there are conflicts within the group about their 'legal' (money-making) and 'illegal' (public recognition) activities:

The aspect of finding compromises and coming to a common denominator is a step to professionalization and connected to the double identity of the group: they run a "legal" crew as a kind of business brand which accepts commissions and earns money and the other "illegal" one, which for them is connected to recognition in public space. (Researcher, ARRF, p2).

Part of the Hoodboys' project explored the ways in which the group members' identities were changing in different ways. The ARP allowed the young people to explore what it might be like to move their art into a more mainstream, legal venue and to interact with the public about their art:

The ARP can be read as an attempt to establish the transition between mainstream, while keeping the subcultural form of graffiti. The short movie presents the group in a legitimate context with showing legal pieces under legal labels such as their legal group name. (Researcher, ARRF, p9)

This transition was fraught, however, and perspectives on its desirability seemed to differ between older and young members of the group:

Growing older and forming adult social bonds is tension-filled as the balance between mainstream and deviance is challenging. As the core of the 'Hoodboys' are all involved in work and are growing older, therefore this concept of aging-out can be transferred to the group. (ARRF, p9)

Nonetheless, the ARP also concluded that *'legalising [graffiti] and transforming it into something mainstream is not an option'* (ARRF, p9) so graffiti as a form of participative activity will remain, for this group, on the margins.

The context of the Hoodboys' identity work (and expression) on the margins is complex. On the one hand, the group believes that it desires and deserves public recognition for graffiti as a

legitimate participation activity; on the other, it is committed to graffiti as a subversive act. On the one hand, the group wants to be seen (or, perhaps more accurately, wants its art to be seen) by non-‘scene’ people; on the other, it wants to remain on the margins. On the one hand, the group recognises that there are benefits to graffiti becoming more mainstream; on the other, group members are concerned that this would dilute their identity as a subcultural and distinctive crew.

These standpoints are not dichotomous (legitimate vs. subversive, visible vs. marginal, mainstream vs. subcultural etc.) but they are conflictual, for individual members of the Hoodboys and for their work as a crew and, crucially, for their identity work as a group which has a fluctuating and vacillating position on the margins:

The social or collective identity of a person is connected to identifiable aspects of belongingness to a certain group. In reference to the ‘Hoodboys’ the practice of doing graffiti in an organised form of a crew serves as a shared ‘identity peg’ (Goffman 1963: 72).

The Hip-Hip’s group ARP was also concerned with voices from the margins. The Hip-Hop group differs from the Hoodboys – who were a long-standing collective – while the Hip-Hop group formed, essentially, for the ARP. The members were part of an informal girls group in a youth centre which took part on the ethnographic work. During discussions about a potential ARP, some of the group expressed an interest in Hip-Hop and particularly Hip-Hop as a form of resistance and representation:

The use of Hip-Hop as some kind of resistance against societal structures is based on [Hip-Hop’s] roots and therefore typical for this music style. This allows the group to thematise illicit practices such as drug consumption on or to refer to their district and spread some kind of local patriotism. It is a way of working on or with boundaries given by the society. [...] The appropriation of other public places than the youth centre is a form of representing and positioning the group within the city. (Researcher, ARRF, p26).

Through this work, the young people wanted to, explicitly, work ‘on or with boundaries given by society’. This, too, is expression from the margins. Similar to the Hoodboys, the Hip-Hop group wanted to address the mis/non-recognition of their art form in wider society. The group, therefore, sought a recognition and acknowledgement for Hip-Hop, and a form of self-expression:

Hip-Hop can integrate multiple forms of music such as rap and singing. Rap has a dense language and it requires an enormous creativity to write lyrics and record them. Rap is also used as a self-imposed form of formulation and presentation of thoughts. (Researcher, ARRF, p21)

The group also set out with the core aim of engaging with the public:

Participation in public life for the group means spreading their music, which serves as a voice tube and also as a platform of promoting their views on a wide variety of topics. (Researcher, ARRF, p25)

After a period spent writing songs and practicing together, the group started to perform in public. Their first appearance was at a youth event organised by the youth centre's youth worker, which attracted from 70 to 100 people. The Hip-Hop group's performance was, the researcher notes, very professional and it was clear that they had practiced enough. The members were delighted with their performance and posted on Facebook afterwards:

"Poaaaaah what an evening!!!! Xxx says thank you to the ClubXYZ. We had so much fun with all of you. The atmosphere was just absolutely great – demolition. Wooow it can hardly be expressed by words what yesterday happened. Thanks to all of you!! You are the best audience in town, man, what an amazing atmosphere, we are all still blown away." (Group's Facebook post, ARRF, p24)

It is notable that though Partispace's involvement with the group has now ended, the group continues and is still performing.

The learning from this ARP is also around identity work, from the margins: 'On an individual level all of the group members needed to engage in the new structure of a collective.' (Researcher, ARRF, p25) Using Goffman's work again on 'identity pegs' (Goffman, 1963, p72), the group, though newly established, quickly constructed a shared and collective identity that was reflective of their ambitions to make Hip-Hop music recognised. This was particularly evident in the ways in which the members of the group worked together to create the music:

All group members were involved in the ARP and supported the writing and recording process with their skills. Recognition of every individual person by involving every person into the recording process is a way of creating a whole out of pieces. Negotiation of style, content and topics to make music is a collective process, which is connected to overcoming own interest for the benefit of the group. The balance between supporting the process of becoming a group and keeping one's own style is challenging, especially at the beginning of this process. (Researcher, ARRF, p25)

The idea of informal and collective learning is also important for this group: 'each one, teach one' (Researcher, ARRF, p25) and the power of collective emancipation is underscored:

[T]he collective performance on stage has been a defining moment for the group. Engagement in a collective practice is a good opportunity to get to know oneself, so the collective level is interwoven with the individual level. (Researcher, ARRF, p25-26)

Finally, in their collective actions, the group engaged with the public, from the margins, in the ways that they had intended: 'the appropriation of other public places than the youth centre is a form of representing and positioning the group within the city' (Researcher, ARRF, 26).

The city report concludes about margin work:

The ARP projects of the 'Hoodboys' and the Hip-Hop group are based on the Hip-Hop lifestyle of representing a crew or a group in a scene and creating a dialogue with the wider society to make youth cultural activities understandable and impart the meaning of them. (Researchers, ARRF, p27)

3.4. Participation on the margins

In this chapter focus has been on ARPs which explore and address topics connected to citizenship, belonging and marginalisation. Starting from young people's lived realities, concerns and preferences, we have seen how participatory practices in these particular projects are framed in relation to a defined lack or absence of material as well as symbolic resources (citizenship rights, housing, employment, recognition). The themes that the different ARPs address are thus shaped in relation to a socio-political context and concrete, everyday conditions of existence. The projects put emphasis on participation as a relational practice, focusing on exploration of topics connected to social positions characterised by subordination. The action that emanates from the research projects is thus clearly embedded in social structure and happens as a response to perceived inadequacies and asymmetrical power-relations in society. From an intersectional point of view (de los Reyes & Mulinari 2005; Yuval-Davis 2011), the interplay between structural obstacles and opportunities to participate frame living conditions and processes of identity making. This in turn complements the actors' perspective, relating participatory action to the wider society. A focus on power-relations makes it possible to understand participation on the margins and the vulnerability connected to it from different but at the same time intertwined perspectives and analytical categories. For example, being young and coming from a socioeconomically underprivileged background (young people at The Box), belonging to a religious/ethnic minority (young people of the Islamic Youth Association), being a refugee without formal citizenship rights and with an extremely limited access to substantial rights (young people of Hidden), means being positioned on the margins, in relation to categories which are operating at the same time. An intersectional perspective puts focus on intersections, that is, the interplay between social categories such as class, gender, 'race'/ethnicity, and age, as well as the processes through which hierarchies are generated. The ARPs offer a space within which the young people can explore, negotiate, discuss, and deepen their knowledge about politically loaded topics such as identity and participation.

Other projects in this section were concerned with being seen and being heard from the margins and for their participatory practices to be recognised and acknowledged. The groups were engaged in non-traditional creative practices (graffiti and Hip-Hop) which were both personally and politically relevant for the young people, and were not least about claiming space within the city. In addition, the young people created and developed an individual and collective identity within these spaces (one, long-standing; one newly-created) that was related to their creative practice and their positions as social and political actors. One of the groups (the Hoodboys) had found itself in a transitional, and conflictual position, where individual members were considering their relation, on the margins, with a mainstream society of which they wished (and yet did not wish) to be part. This identity-work of individual members had

brought a compromise to the group's 'whole' identity because, as the young people themselves noted they are the 'crew' and the 'crew' is them.

All of the groups communicated a message to a wider society of which they did not feel part: they are addressing shortcomings of the world, exploring the very meaning of participation on the margins of citizenship and belonging.

4. Change-making and activism

A number of the groups and ARPs set out with the aim of working towards a change of some sort. Nearly all of the projects are relevant to this chapter in some way because they all set out to examine and/ or address social issues. They were all in some way action-focused. The Islamic Youth Association, for example, explored the ways in which the young women in the group were able to challenge stereotypes and stigmatisation through the project, particularly around perceptions of wearing the veil. The YHRI also worked towards challenging stereotypes, in this case, about homelessness. Partirennes, on the other hand, explored youth participation with other young people. Change-making in the context of the current analysis, however, is further broken down:

1. socio-political change-making, which includes raising awareness and generating dialogue about social issues, and building knowledge and understanding about social issues for the purposes of action or solutions.

2. practical change-making, which concerns addressing a practical issue in the young people's groups or cities.

With these categories in mind, this chapter explores the following projects in detail:

Socio-political change-making:

- Manchester - The Box: raising awareness/ generating dialogue about homelessness
- Manchester - Hidden: raising awareness/ generating dialogue about the lived experiences of young people seeking asylum
- Eskişehir - Solidarity with Refugees: building knowledge about refugees
- Plovdiv - Youth Party Section: understanding and addressing youth political apathy
- Zurich - Girls Group: building knowledge on bullying
- Zurich - Political Youth Association: understanding and addressing passivity of members of the association

Practical change-making:

- Eskişehir - Youth Workers: improving youth work
- Gothenburg - the Drama Group: becoming an independent theatre company
- Plovdiv - Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation: re-purposing disused space
- Gothenburg – Free Sport Association: finding an alternative space
- Frankfurt – Political and Cultural Centre: maintaining an alternative space

4.1.Socio-political change-making projects

The learning around change-making in this subsection is explored using social movement and collective action theories and by considering how young people mobilise to bring about social and political change and to come together to ‘make democracy’ (Blee, 2012). These theoretical perspectives did not guide the projects; rather, using the broadly grounded theory approach adopted in the Partispace project, the ideas emerged during the ARPs as the groups developed their projects.

Raising awareness and generating public dialogue

Two ARPs set out with the aim of *raising awareness and generating public dialogue* around social issues: *The Box* (for their project on homelessness); and *Hidden* (for their project on young people seeking asylum). These groups, despite knowing (or perhaps *because* of knowing) that they form part of marginalised and stigmatised groups (Goffman, 1963), began their ARPs with the aim of interacting with the public in some way in order to raise awareness of their group’s activities and lived experiences and to generate a dialogue about the realities of being homeless or being a young person seeking asylum. In working towards this aim, the young people in these groups wanted to overcome their ‘invisibility’ in the public domain. The emotional aspects of these projects cannot be underestimated and it is notable that they both used creative methods to make their emotional appeal, which is often ‘conveyed through symbolic artistic and stylistic means rather than argument alone’ (West, 2013, p170 drawing on work in Goodwin et al, 2001, and Jasper, 1997).

The process of the ARPs in these spaces is important for exploring the ways in which the young people created their change-oriented work. Throughout the ARP, the young men in *The Box* learned about the power of creative techniques in and the ‘act of making to bring about dialogue and to become part of a collaborative project’ (ARRM, p4). Through the symbolisation of the plants in the plant boxes and the representations of homelessness depicted in the viewing boxes, the men were able to depict the meaning of homelessness for them, to the public, in non-literal and ambiguous ways. For example, Luke, one of the young men, asked the question: ‘What plant would express humiliation?’ (ARRM, p5). The learning from *The Box* suggests, however, that the core focus of the project was unfalteringly about depicting the realities of homelessness. In contrast, the first several weeks of the *Hidden* project indicated that it was difficult for the young people to arrive at a focus for the project because of their ‘awareness of the multitude of issues that affect them in individual or collective ways’ (ARRM, p12). This process illustrated the importance of within-group dialogue, exchange and reflection in AR. The young people in *Hidden* remarked a number of times that they were frustrated by the circularity of some of their discussions and that they were impatient to get ‘something’ started; nonetheless, the group persevered as ideas came and went.

After deciding upon a collective focus of reaching out to the public in some way, it took some more weeks of meeting and exploring ideas before the young people arrived at a decision about what they would do. Even then, the large group became two – one half wrote some brief essays on their concerns for asylum seekers while the other wrote and performed the play, ‘Faceless’ (the focus of the report). These processes of exchange were evident in many of the groups of young people and were crucial to the development of the ARP. One report described the process

as 'demonstrating the importance of dialogue and social learning in participation' (ARRM, p24).

'Faceless' was filmed in the Hidden offices on a sparse corridor that became a 'waiting room' for the set. The idea of a waiting room resonated with the group because of the time they spend 'waiting' (figuratively and literally). The script did not draw particular attention to the location, or comment upon its sparsity, yet at the film's premiere at a local symposium to celebrate the groups and young people, a number of audience members commented upon the filming location. In addition, the audience members remarked that two of the actors' faces (both the Faceless characters in the play) were blurred on screen (Stranger's face was not). The blurring was a decision made by one of the young people because she did not want to be identified on screen (and the other young person followed suit). 'Stranger' did not want to be blurred and this decision befitted her character but also and more importantly reflected the young person's assertions throughout the AR process; she was determined, she reported, not to be 'hidden' and scared any longer. Through the location and blurring, however, the young people here too were able to communicate in ambiguous, unspoken and symbolic ways with the audience.

In AR, it is not always possible to measure 'outcomes' such as effectiveness of or benefits from forms of participation. It is as important to explore what took place during the project and, crucially, what the young people learned about their participation and participation in general through the project. Learning about participation in this way is relevant to all of the work explored in this chapter.

The ARPs completed by The Box and Hidden constituted social movements in a number of respects. Principally, the projects aimed to address the public about the young people's lived experiences of being homeless or being a young person seeking asylum. Interestingly, the experiences of the young people in these groups are similar: invisibility and stigmatisation; precarity and vulnerability; and a sense of existing only on the margins. Some of these ideas were explored in Chapter 3 oben. Exploring these experiences using social movement theories, and understanding how they inform an activism, and a social movement 'as a particular form of politics' (West, 2013, p28) and making of democracy (Blee, 2012), enhances learning about the young people's participation in terms of their personal and political motivations for the projects, their engagement with the projects, and their intended outcomes. To phrase this in another way, the learning from many of the ARPs are indicative of social movements in the making.

Here, The Box and Hidden are conceived broadly as aspiring social movements which are responding to the inequalities imposed upon them (Schaeffer, 2014). Awareness- and consciousness-raising, as a form of activism, were first popularised by feminists in the United States during the second wave feminist movement. Mitchell (1971) characterised consciousness-raising as making the hidden visible:

The process of transforming the hidden, individual fears of women into a shared awareness of the meaning of them as social problems, the release of anger, anxiety, the struggle of proclaiming the painful and transforming it into the political - this process is consciousness-raising. (p60)

In addition, Mitchell linked consciousness-raising to reinterpretation of a Chinese revolutionary practice of ‘speaking bitterness’, which she argued is the basis of consciousness-raising:

‘Speaking bitterness’ is the bringing to consciousness of the virtually unconscious oppression; one person’s realization of an injustice brings to mind other injustices for the whole group. (p61)

Examples of ‘speaking bitterness’ were evident throughout the Box and Hidden projects - the young people in talking about their experiences made reference throughout the projects to their experiences of homelessness and asylum-seeking. On the walking tours around the planters, the young men from the Box pointed out places (e.g. carparks) where they used to sleep rough, other places where they used to store their belongings, and the back streets where they used to walk to avoid ‘trouble’ on the main thoroughfares. Similarly, the young people in Hidden recounted experiences from their lives that made them feel ashamed and marginalised:

Because I am different. I came with big courage, from my house, took the bus, thought, this is September, wear nice clothes, big hall for ESOL [registration], I say, ‘let me go there’. I queued for one and a half hrs [and was then declined]. All my courage, all everything, it goes down, I say, I was very shamed. (Eleta, ARRM, p11)

The Faceless script drew upon these similar experiences to depict the invisibility, shame, and stigma of being someone who is seeking asylum. For example, during the play, Faceless says to Stranger:

Indeed. We are as shadows, drifting lifelessly through a kind of time you know not of – a time where ten years for you is an eternity for us, and yet in that eternity our progress through life can be as little as a day, or a week. (Faceless script).

These insights into the young people’s lives throughout the projects, and the ways in which the young people drew upon their experiences in the projects, are examples of the ‘speaking bitterness’ that is central to consciousness-raising.

Chapter 3 (‘on the margins of citizenship’) explored the ways in which young people in The Box and Hidden are aware of their marginalised and stigmatised identities. Part of the motivation for both projects was to challenge these stigmatised identities through consciousness-raising with the public. The young people wanted to show the ‘normals’ (Goffman, 1963) aspects of their lives that the ‘normals’ might not otherwise know. The Box’s planters, for example, symbolised the men’s lived reality of homelessness - washing in public toilets, sleeping in carparks, and drug use. These symbols were presented to the audience and were often left ambiguous (that is, not explicitly described by the men on the walking tours) so that they could be interpreted by the audience.

This challenging of stigmatisation is also part of awareness-raising and suggests also a further element of social movements: that of challenging structures or systems of authority (Snow &

Soule, 2010) from which these stigmatising discourses derive. Systems of authority in this sense are:

based on underlying sets of interconnected values, beliefs, and interpretive frameworks that rationalise the distribution and exercise of the authority and provide vocabularies of motive that can be used not only to justify adherence to the regulations or procedures but also to challenge their perceived violation (p9)

The young men on the walking tours talked about the impacts of austerity in Britain on homelessness in the city and nationally and the ways in which recent economic and social change has meant that the homeless are demonised as being lazy and 'feckless'. The men heard these discourses reiterated:

An audience member at the film exhibition said: 'I was at a meeting the other week and we were told that there is no reason in Manchester for anyone to sleep rough and that is the council's version. [...] I think there is a belief that support is not required.' (ARRM, p5)

Similarly, the young people in Hidden talked about the ways in which they believed they are viewed. For example, Aafa said: 'I go [into] some shop, security looking, looking, and then around and then go back and they think, stolen something, I do not feel good inside.' (ARRM, p11). In addition, the Hidden young people discussed the impacts of changing discourses on immigration on the ways that they are viewed:

Some of this discussion took place just days after the Manchester bombing and the young people reported that they felt more vulnerable than before. They were worried about how they were being viewed (even though not all of the group were Muslim) and how they were ever to successfully apply for asylum with what had happened'. (ARRM, p11).

The deeply personal nature of The Box and Hidden's projects was striking for a number of reasons. First, the young people in both projects drew upon their biographies of being homeless or being a young person seeking asylum in creating their projects. In Hidden, the Faceless script seemed to encapsulate how the young people's lived realities make them feel:

The script when it is first presented seems to offer the young people a way to express how they truly feel about their situations. It reflects their discussions about being invisible and feeling ashamed of their existence.' (ARRM, p15)

Through the play, the group,

embraced their vulnerability and used it to challenge their 'stigma' (Goffman, 1963) and their disenfranchisement. In doing so, they explored their feelings of shame and of othering, their fear and their frustration and anger. Through the work, however, they told us about their invisibility and vulnerability. (ARRM, p18)

And emotions were always prevalent in the space:

Emotions were always close to the surface and central to the work that they did together - the parts they acted in the film, the ideas they brought to the parts, and their conversations about their work. (ARRM, p18)

The young people in both groups all felt personally aggrieved about an aspect of their lives about which they wanted to protest. The young men in *The Box* were still experiencing the precariousness of homelessness in some respects (for example, temporary or unstable accommodation) and the young people in *Hidden* were all 'without status' (leave to remain in the country). Furthermore, the conditions leading up to and currently affecting their situations were always prevalent to the young people. Throughout the projects, the researchers in these spaces were often told stories from the young people's past and present, which one of the researchers described in reflections as 'drip-feeding biographies'. The silences in *Hidden* were particularly telling at times: 'The moments of silence are frequent and moving and it seems that the *knowing* is always on the surface.' (ARRM, p17) while the frequent volatility and changeability of *The Box* was also notable (for example, when one of the young people approached the researcher to tell her his story as if out of nowhere). Blee (2012, p135) notes here that it is as important to pay attention to 'what doesn't happen and what isn't said' in the making of activism.

These aspects of the young people's personal biographies inform what is known as 'grievance mobilisation'. It is undoubted that all of these young people had legitimate grievances around inequality and injustice; however, it is the 'interpretive malleability of one's biography and sense of self' (Snow & Soule, 2010, p48) that inform the extent to which an individual's grievances will be mobilised in terms of activism. Early social movement theories (such as Marx's work) were more concerned with the grievances that came from material inequality and class struggles and while those ideas might be relevant to the young people in these groups, the process of 'speaking bitterness' and voicing experiences is crucial to the 'biographical reconstructions' that often take place when individuals are becoming 'active'. For example, in Blee's (2002) work on women involved in racist movements, the women reported that they 'reassessed' their interests and in many respects remade themselves to fit into the racist mould that was required in the movement. Blee argues that these women reconstructed their biographies in order to rationalise a participation in racist organisations. This biographical reconstruction may seem extreme, in this case, but it is useful to understand mobilising activism within this framework: 'Those issues were not seen as particularly troublesome or pressing until they viewed them from the vantage point of the relevant movement.' (Snow & Soule, 2010, p50)

In this way, the subjectivity of mobilisation is a key part of understanding social movements, and particularly so because of a common criticism of earlier social movement theories for being overly structural (e.g. Marx's work) and insufficiently focused on 'meaning work' in social movements (Johnston & Noakes, 2005). It is, however, the 'meaning work' that is central to many of the ARPs in the Partispace project. Gamson's (2002) work among others is useful in understanding the ways in which collective action can derive. First, there is an identity-focus where an aggrieved group with shared interests and values are able to identify a 'we' and a plausible and notable 'them'. Second, there is an agency-focus where there is a recognition

the circumstances and inequalities that define the 'we' and the 'them' can and should be changed, which leads to a mobilisation of the 'we'. Third, there is an (in)justice-base, where the cause' of the grievances and inequalities - individuals and institutions ('them') - are identified and to which the 'we' responds (Johnston & Noakes, 2005).

Through interaction, discussion, and 'speaking bitterness' within movements or organisations, biographies and grievances are interpreted and activated in a way that brings about collective action. In terms of the current study, the young men in The Box had quite similar biographies in terms of their homelessness and, as such, were organically drawn to the project to the raising-awareness about homelessness. The young people in Hidden had a broader variety of experiences, however, some of which seemed to be more pertinent than others in terms of 'grievances'. Through discussions and interactions, the young people seemed to be equally aggrieved about the idea of invisibility and the stigmatisation of asylum seekers and these issues, therefore, became the focus of their project. (See also Goffman's frame analysis.) In both groups, however, the young people could immediately identify the 'we' - the poor, the homeless, the hidden, the illegal, the disenfranchised, the dispossessed (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013) - and the 'them' to whom they must respond, and this collectivism enabled a project to form.

Building knowledge and understanding in order to act

A number of the projects also aimed to *build knowledge and understanding in order to act*. Again, these young people were concerned about a social issue that was in some way meaningful to them. Two ARPs are included first in this subsection to explore this form of participation: *Solidarity with Refugees* and the *Girls Group*. The aim of building knowledge is closely related to that of raising awareness. Where ARPs with this rationale differ is that, first, their aims in terms of dialogue and change were in most respects beyond the immediate needs of the group members. That is, that the social issues at the core of the ARP were not explicitly personal or biographical for the young people who did the project. In this sense, the ARPs might be understood a different form of collective action or altruistic social movements which help potentially subordinate groups who lack the legal standing, political capacity and capital, or economic resources to act on their own behalf (Schaeffer, 2014) Second, then, these ARPs also aimed to initiate an action or set solutions in response to the issues under exploration.

The first group - Solidarity with Refugees - sought to contribute to the integration of refugees (though they were not refugees themselves) in their city by building knowledge and understanding of the experiences and needs of refugee groups. The aim of this project was also, therefore, about inclusion of refugees. One member of the group described the project:

Political discussions over refugees and separatist tendencies against refugees have given rise to unfavorable protests and discourses. That local and national media has created such a perception that refugees are threat risk has led to them and us situation between refugees and local residents. By looking for a possibility of reducing these separatist discourses or protests a little bit we had such aims to reach contributing to the healthy communication between local residents and refugees by increasing their

interactions with one another. We wished to build a 'neighborhood solidarity' in a sense specific to Eskişehir, to Istiklal neighborhood (where the initiative is located) in a micro scale; to create such an atmosphere where refugees coming to a foreign country to escape war and political oppressions of their own countries improve their communication with local residents and tradesmen; to decrease local residents' hate speech; to strengthen the ties of refugees with the city. (Ahmet, ARRE, p3)

This quote describes the clear rationale for the project and the tangible solution-focused aims of the young people's work. Like the Box and Hidden, Solidarity with Refugees also focused on challenging dominant negative and 'separatist' discourses around refugees (a similar sense of 'we' and 'them'). In this respect, the ARP had community cohesion and solidarity at its core.

The Girls Group aimed to learn more about bullying between young people; this project therefore also aimed to inform a knowledge that would be useful for wider groups of young people. The issue of bullying was not depicted as clearly personal or biographical for the young women, though the girls did imply previous negative experiences.

Although it was difficult for the girls to express the relevance of the topic for themselves, or to express verbally why they chose this topic in the context of the action research, it could be clearly observed during their conversation that bullying was a subject, which is very much present for them. During the discussion the girls confirmed, without getting into concrete details, that they themselves already have made negative experiences in connection to bullying. (ARRZ, p.15).

Indeed, the young people involved in the ARP wanted to:

Work on the topic by giving information and to 'give lessons' to offenders about the severe consequences for bullying victims. [...] On the one hand [the group] aimed at broadening their knowledge about bullying and to gain more information about it. On the other hand, they wanted to do a kind of preventive awareness work and to raise attention for the topic in society.' (ARRZ, p15)

When they were establishing the project, the young people in Solidarity for Refugees learned about the problems faced by refugees as they travel to another country (e.g. lack of knowledge about legal issues and refugee rights) and, based on that learning, organised a series of events called 'Solidarity with Refugees' month, including classes, workshops and entertainment for refugees, for which they sought local support. They also learned about the 'heterogeneity of refugees' (ARRE, p3) and the broad range of refugee groups and their needs (e.g. Syrian refugees after the civil war), which were unexpected findings for them.

The learning from the project that could be used in future work with refugees was around the importance of building trust with refugee groups and in considering their particular age, gender and histories in classes or workshops etc. For example, the group was surprised that few women came to their events and they were able to reflect this learning in their planning and include it

in their project, going forward. In addition, the group learned that they had to moderate their expectations in this sort of work and they were not able to work with as many refugees as possible (in terms of time, space or resources). This indicates the difficulty with these sorts of participative practices and what is possible to achieve compared to what is desirable. The report also notes: 'What we learned about participation, from this ARP, is that explicitly defined roles and explicit incentives seem to be important for young people to participate'. (ARRE, p2).

This is also important learning for projects that aim to create a set of actions or solutions (in terms of clarity and definition), but the learning can be applied to all projects where there is an expectation that young people are committed to participation. In the Solidarity for Refugees group, this issue was particularly prevalent because much of the work was done by one person (Ahmet). The others had seemed committed to the project, and ambitious for its aims, but then started to participate less and less. Ahmet struggled with this and said that he did not want to push others to engage in the project because it would become an 'obligation' than 'collaboration' (ARRE, p6). As such, most of the work became his responsibility.

The Girls Group succeeded in generating knowledge about bullying, some of which surprised them also. For example, the girls were taken aback that the number of cases of bullying reported each year is unknown, while some of the people that the group interviewed in their street interviews did not seem able to say much about bullying at all. The young women were also surprised to learn that the responses from adults and young on the issue of bullying were not as different as they had predicted, while they also found that young people did not know more about bullying than adults.

Importantly, the young women seemed to be empowered by what they had learned from the project in terms of what they would do if they were affected by bullying. One young woman told the researchers that 'she could now fight actively against bullying' (ARRZ, p21). And about what they would do in a bullying situation, she said:

If it concerns me, I would act in a different way as when it concerns someone else. I mean I for myself would go straight go to someone, but there are also many who don't want to confront other persons, if one is bullied, because they are ashamed. (ARRZ, p21)

Another young woman reported:

'that it [bullying] has to be reported, because we interviewed a lot of people who said that they already have been bullied in the past. Or they do not want to talk about it. And I did not expect that we really find someone, who experienced bullying. I mean that in general a lot of people experienced being bullied. (ARRZ, p21)

And another young woman said:

Well, I'll try to realize these suggestions, which have been given by the interviewed adults or the young people or to react if we get confronted with [bullying]' (ARRZ, p21)

As the project aimed to come up with solutions to bullying, this is important and practical learning. The girls concluded that more needs to be known about bullying (explanations) in order to understand how to address it. They had also come up with some more ideas about how to further their reach by sending the edited video for the ARP to bullying information centres and to seek financial support for creating a TV series.

Importantly for these young people, and for the Solidarity with Refugees group, their participative activity served a clear function (addressing a social problem or gap in social provision). There are interesting contrasts in terms of the ways in which young people in The Box and Hidden, and those in Solidarity with Refugees and the Girls Group, explored the social and personal issues which were central to the projects and the ways in which this informal learning was in itself a form of participation. The issues at the core of The Box and Hidden projects were embedded within the young person's lived experiences, while those central to Solidarity with Refugees and the Girls Group were largely concerned with understanding other people's experiences. Informal learning took place throughout the projects – about the issues, creative techniques, modes of enquiry and community engagement – and sometimes brought about unexpected outcomes (e.g. the Girls Group surprise about adult v. young people's responses to questions on bullying). Nonetheless, the informal learning in this sense was purposeful and integral to the aims of the project. This is summed up well in one of the reports: 'The groups intended to gain knowledge that provides a springboard for action.' (ARRZ, p20).

A further element of building knowledge is relevant to two more projects: the *Party Youth Section* and *Political Youth Association*. Both of these groups set out to understand the problem (or the perceived problem of) youth political apathy. The young people explored this issue with somewhat different purposes however: The Party Youth Section (of a political party) wanted to understand youth political apathy in general in their city, while the Political Youth Association wanted to understand the reasons behind the passivity of some of the members of the association. Both of these projects also aimed to generate ideas for concrete action (youth political apathy and membership passivity); they were also, however, concerned with improving understanding of a social phenomenon for purposes beyond the immediate needs of the group.

The Party Youth Section agreed in their ARP that:

A gradual political de-socialization of youth was under way, that 'something has been broken' in the relations between generations, that today's young people did not believe in parties and public institutions and even to some extent in the EU. (ARRP, p8)

The young people in the Party Youth Section were alarmed about what they saw as political apathy because they felt, as political actors themselves, unable to effect changes. The ARP became about building and understanding motivations (or lack of) for voting activity, interest in politics and the news, and attitudes to politics and politics, and emigration (the future for young people in the country and city). In short, the group sought to examine youth political participation.

In terms of understanding, the group found (though they cautioned against generalisations) that young people do view politics negatively and that they do not trust political elites and institutions. From these findings and the group discussions, the group came up with a series of concerns and suggestions - depopulation, youth empowerment and transitions to work - about where they would like to focus their efforts in the future in order to address political apathy. They also decided to continue their exploration and to begin immediately to engage more actively with young people around these issues. Importantly, the group intended:

Not just to get the young people engaged in public causes but also to raise the awareness of the authorities and make them do some actions for encouraging youth participation. (ARRP, p19).

The Political Youth Association was concerned with addressing the passivity of some members of their association. They formulated research questions aimed at finding a solution to the perceived problem: 'How can 'passive' association members be turned into active members, or, how can a commitment of these 'passive' members be stimulated?' (ARRZ, p6). The young people learned, in the main, that being active in the organisation may be explained by the strength of personal contacts between members and the executive board - the greater the personal connection, the stronger the likelihood of voluntary commitment to the association. Passive members, on the other hand, are more detached from the association are members only for information or discussions ('consumption members'). The young people in the Political Youth Association intended, after the project, to utilise this new knowledge 'to claim an active commitment of the association members' (ARRZ, p12) and the young people had come up with a series of actions to implement in the future.

Again, the idea of a 'springboard for action' was again important for these groups (ARRZ, p31) though the idea of the projects was still rooted in building knowledge, exploring social issues, and working towards a socio-cultural change.

The/ a conventional view of social movements and activism, and the view drawn upon above, is that they have specific political intent. However, collective action does not spring automatically from structural tensions (della Porta, 2010, p63). This is the case here where the motivations for the projects are (arguably) less political and more orientated towards taking action to find solutions to particular social problems. It is notable (though it is also possibly coincidental) that neither Solidarity for Refugees nor the Girls Group used the creative methods described above to explore social issues opting instead for conversation-based work. In this sense, symbolism and ambiguity were less appropriate for the projects as they were deliberately fact-finding and action-oriented. Literature which explores collective action in this way focuses on the role of values: 'actors define specific goals and identify strategies which are both efficient and morally specific. [...] Values [also] provide the motivations necessary to sustain the costs of action' (della Porta, 2010, p67)

In this sense, we:

Could also interpret collective action as evidence of the emergence of trends towards social reintegration rather than disintegration; as proof, in other words, of the formation and consolidation of new value systems. (2010, p63)

Evidence of this trend emerged from the Solidarity with Refugees project in particular in their aims to help refugees within a political and social context that they saw as problematic. The young people's values were central to this political action. This is not to say that the young people, particularly in Solidarity with Refugees, were not concerned by the power structures which create or enable social problems; rather they wanted to provide help within that context and without directly challenging it. Returning to the idea of an altruistic social movement which sets out to help others with the aim of increasing knowledge, and providing resources or other help, the young people in Solidarity for Refugees and Girls Group used their social and culture capital in various ways to help others in ways that may not have been available otherwise. In addition, these young people created a 'space in which people could learn together' (Blee, 2012, p99), which reflects Lichterman's (1998) idea of a 'forum' with critically reflective discussion [where] members converse and learn together as an end in itself' (2012, p99). This returns again to the idea of informal learning.

Young people's collective action, social movements and making democracy

The discussion in the first part of this chapter underscores the outcomes and learning from young people working together to bring about some sort of socio-political change, for their immediate groups or other groups. There is also important learning for participation in terms of what the ARPs mean for the 'making of democracy'.

When one thinks of social movements, one might think of the global feminist, anti-war or anti-racist movements rather than small scale, grassroots, and often temporary social movements, such as those described in this chapter. The basic workings of AR resonate with the startings of social movements and the ways in which people gather, explore, activate, learn and evolve. In her book on 'making democracy', Blee (2012) emphasises the importance of these tiny and often short-lived movements for '[shaping] new ways of talking and doing politics, invigorating public dialogue with what Marc Steinberg terms a 'moral vision of the world'' (Blee, 2012, p3). In this way, and with these 'new ways of talking and doing politics', Blee argues for a broadening of conventional definitions of democracy (the formal institutions of elections and the legislature) to include grassroots political action which practices democracy differently 'beneath and beyond the state' (p.4, drawing on Balibar's 2008 work). Here, 'democracy is a verb, not an adjective. It is the action of people as they deliberate to affect society' (p3). In addition, 'activism-as-democracy is not institutional or structural. It is a process, ever being made' (p3, again drawing in Balibar's 2008 work).

Civil society (and particularly social movements) in the role of democratisation has not been the emphasis of social sciences study, which has generally focused on the democratisation of political elites rather than civic actors (della Porta, 2013). Nonetheless, there is a known link between democracy and social movements (della Porta, 2013; Tilly, 2004). Research evidence on the extent to which social movements are successful or effective in bringing about changes to democratic processes or structures, or in improving democratisation, is still relatively scarce and what does exist suggests that assessing effectiveness or some sort of 'cause and effect' is challenging at best (della Porta and Diani, 2006). The learning from the ARPs discussed here is not concerned with such evaluation either; rather, what is crucial here is looking at the ways

that democracy is exercised within and by groups of young people who engage with change-making action.

Blee (2012) argues also that it is crucial to study these small and emerging groups in order to understand the difficulties of starting collective action, to explore the ways grassroots organisations evolve now, and to examine their role (which should not be understated) in the landscape of social movements. Indeed, many of the movements that start small could gain the sort of momentum and support that is needed to sustain a larger, sustained social movement. This is important learning in the Partispace project as we explore new and emerging forms of young people's social and political participation in Europe. Utilising these ideas around democracy, social movements and doing politics 'differently' helps to explore the uniqueness and importance of the ARPs explored in this chapter in terms of the young people's motivations, experiences and expectations in political and social action. While they have not been the focus of this chapter, a small number of ARPs did not succeed (they did not manage to start or gain any momentum, or stay together, within the project); these too illuminate the workings of small social movements in terms of why they did not endure. All of the groups that have been included, however, began a project to bring about change in some way, and to work towards some sort of political and/ or social action. The aim here is not necessarily to identify when the young people's activism 'started'. Most of the young people had been part of the group already (and nearly all of the groups took part in the case studies for Partispace) and in some cases the ARPs were an extension of or addition to what they were already doing rather than a completely new piece of work (e.g. the Political Youth Association, which was already formed while the ARP examined an aspect of their working together). It is, however, possible to see how the activism evolved in the context of the ARPs.

These processes of activating within the ARPs can be better understood by examining the processes of establishing the projects (see project summaries above). These processes took different forms and various lengths of time but all shared a working through of conversations and dialogue between the young people, and the young people and 'adult researchers', as a focus for the project was decided. 'Defining who they are is a fundamental accomplishment of activist groups' (Blee, 2012, p53). '[They all] wrestle with who they are, especially in their early days, but the intensity with which they do so varies. For some, it becomes a major focus, even a point of conflict. In others, self-definition generates little discussion and no friction' (p179).

Again in her work, Blee, observing several new and grassroots organisations which were beginning their activist journey together, examined the processes of generating activism. We observed (and worked with the young people) in many similar processes in the ARPs which began with conversations, an array of ideas and potentially key issues, and a 'wider horizon of possibility' (Blee, 2012, p29). The dynamics that shaped the groups in Blee's work are concerned with the group members finding and developing ways of working together in order to realise their ambitions and operating from a collective sense of what is possible. In the ARPs in this chapter, these processes were often fraught and charged and characterised by disagreement between the young people and friction in arriving at a starting point. In this way, 'meaning-making is ubiquitous across grassroots groups [...] as they weigh strategic decisions,

decide what are appropriate emotional exchanges, and evaluate their results to learn whether they are successful.’ (Blee, 2012, p31)

4.2. Practical change-making projects

A number of the ARPs set out to bring about a practical change for their groups or in their cities through their projects. As above, a number of the ARPs could be included in the current section: for example, the Political Youth Association’s action to address passivity in some of its party membership or Solidarity with Refugees for its aim of working with refugees to help them in transitions. The projects in this section are considered in two ways: first, where the aims were around making a change that was in some way intrinsic to the group’s working; and second, making a change that involved finding, changing, or maintaining an alternative *space* for participation.

Changing group working practices and structure

A group of youth workers in one city who prepared a handbook and training for youth workers, and, a theatre group (who worked towards becoming an independent theatre group), are examples of this type of ARP.

The *Youth Workers* set out to improve ‘their social recognition’ (ARRE, p8), which is perceived as being low because youth work is a new and developing sector in their country. The young people also wanted to improve youth workers’ working conditions, which are often unsafe. The group decided to prepare a handbook, and to run a complementary workshop as a training process, in the absence of the formal and professional education for youth workers. The project also considered the youth workers’ autonomy within the municipality, their budgets and their capacity for professional development. In other words, this ARP set out to first of all assess youth workers’ conditions and needs and second to try to address some of these needs through the project. The planned outcome, then, was resource-based and took the form of a youth work handbook and a complementary workshop for youth workers. A further key element of the ARP was its intention to facilitate the young people’s professional development.

The realisation of the project was, however, difficult. In writing of the handbook, the young workers experienced problems because of the varying educational backgrounds of the group and the impact that this had on the writing style of the handbook. In addition, communication between the youth workers and the experts feeding back was inconsistent. The lack of feedback, and the problems that the young people had in writing the handbook, meant that it was more reiterative of existing literature than an original handbook.

The workshop was much more successful. It is not wholly clear why this was the case but the national report implies that workshop participants enjoyed the interactions of the workshop, and the variety of activities. Organising the workshop was also challenging at times – particularly as it took place in an affordable though not necessarily adequate, and unfamiliar, space - because the workshop was constrained by resources. Nonetheless, a second workshop is planned.

The Drama Group’s project had a dual purpose: first, to create a play for an audience and, second, for the young people to evolve from a formal structure to become a self-managed and

independent group. The project involved a creative process (the play) and a process of learning how structures work (for becoming independent). Importantly for learning about change:

This ARP encompasses a process of gradual shift in the facilitation of participatory practice: a shift away from participating within the formal structure of the Culture School, towards participation characterized by self-initiation and self-management. (ARRG, p3)

Breaking the purpose of the ARP down further, the purpose of the work was to 'follow, document, analyse and learn from the groups' self-initiated working process towards becoming an independent theatre group' (ARRG, p 4) while the group learned about the working structure and creating a 'functioning infrastructure' (ARRG, p4) behind a finished product (e.g. finding a rehearsal space, distributing roles, and working together as a group). During the course of the ARP, the group struggled to become functional as a self-organised group. The report summarises the problems in terms of non-functioning (non-productive/ non-constructive) group dynamics, which ranged from sporadic attendance of members and keeping the group intact to clashes within the group about the form and content of the play. In addition, the group felt unsupported, and that they were not 'taken seriously', by theatre officials. This recognition led to the group believing that they struggled to be noticed, which was demotivating for a group of, by and large, passionate and ambitious young people. The young people also realised the importance of having a clear working structure in place (e.g. roles, decisions etc.) in order to facilitate the creative process of writing the play and seeing it through to completion. One member said: 'everyone wanting to do everything at once' (ARRG, p.9)

The group did not manage to complete the play during the course of the project but concluded nonetheless that 'failing' and reflecting were a vital part of the learning process and they felt that what was important was that they undertook such an ambitious project to start with, within the context also of shifting their group to becoming self-managed. The difficulties that the group experienced with trying to create a play, and the risk-taking with which they engaged, informed the young people's understanding of what it means to participate in this self-managed way, even if they reflected later that their ambitions were, perhaps, set too high. Nonetheless, the project clarified the group's ambitions and capacities (personal and creative) and, while the future of the Drama Group was uncertain by the end of the project, the young people had become more reflexive about their working processes.

Creating and maintaining an alternative space

This section considers ARPs which aimed to create and/ or maintain an alternative space for participation: Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation (which re-purposed a disused space); the Free Sport Association (which found an alternative space); and the Political and Cultural Centre (which worked towards maintaining an existing alternative space).

The *Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation* (YEF) used their entrepreneurial skills in order to find a solution to a particular problem - in this case, to (re)cultivate a disused area of the city beside a school. While repurposing the space was the core idea for the project, the group also wanted to involve others in the project so that it could explore the extent to which young people

could be active change-makers in their own environment. As the group decided upon the location for their project, they were concerned with the extent to which the project would be meaningful to other young people. In this respect, the young people speculated that they needed to address a problem closer to their everyday lives. This is how the group finally arrived at the decision to regenerate the schoolyard.

The YEF was able to work independently and were able to involve other young people in the project successfully, as one of their key aims. The initial plans for the regeneration were ambitious and the young people found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the project would take longer than they first imagined and would necessarily have to be broken down into stages.

Learning from this project indicated the importance of dialogue with stakeholders and the necessity of personal relevance for change-making projects. That is, that other young people are more likely to engage with a change-making project if the proposed change has real relevance for their lives (cf. 'broader civil society topics') (ARRP, p17). Importantly, however, the national report notes that the YEF benefitted from their background in project work and in making projects successful, and have some status as an 'elite' group in terms of resources and levels of capital.

The *Free Sport Association* decided the aim of its ARP based on ideas that had been exploring previously. The Free Sport Association was located in an area just outside of the city and had been working on designing and developing a self-governed and self-maintained participative meeting space for some time. The ARP represented an opportunity to intensify some of this work as part of an ongoing process. While this ARP was focused on finding an alternative space, it also involved inevitable organisational changes, for example, in terms of establishing a space where a range of activities (and not just Parkour, Free Sport Association's core activity) could come together. Also, and importantly, the young people in Free Sport Association wanted to ensure that a new space was inclusive for other groups of young people who, like them, may have struggled for voice and resources. This motivation was based, in part, on the young people's previous experiences with municipal decision-makers who have favoured more traditional sports and organisations in resource allocation. Democratic ideals of inclusion, collaboration and openness were at the core of Free Sport Association's project to create the new self-governed and self-maintained space, and one of the main learning outcomes from the work was about learning to collaborate and building links.

The young people in the Free Sport Association noted the importance of informal learning in their project:

We learn from each other. And in this process, it's important that you allow for mistakes to happen. Because everybody benefits from this – we exchange experiences, we learn from each other (Kadar, ARRG, p18).

This focus on informal learning in this project reflects other solution-focused ARPs in the Partispace project, namely, Solidarity with Refugees and Girls Group. In this sense, informal learning became a form of participation:

There are solutions for everything, and there will be loads of information and knowledge to take part of and learn from (Kadar, ARRG, p18).

By the end of the ARP, the Free Sport Association had made considerable progress though there was still a great deal to do to create the new space. The young people continued to be constrained by a lack of resources and were frustrated by their interactions with decision- and policy-makers and the platitudes they received for their enthusiasm. One young person summed up his perspective: 'Yeah, it's like – you don't want to lose your money on something new, you rather lose [it] on something old' (Kadar, ARRG, p23).

The *Political and Cultural Centre* (Political and Cultural Centre) was already established in a space, though the young people learned that the building was due for demolition. The ARP, then, became about trying to maintain the space in the interim while also balancing the art, culture and politics at the heart of the group. In the group discussion for the Partispace case studies, the young people described themselves:

First is that we are grass-root-democratic and orientated on consensus, it's free of hierarchy [...] and the second thing is that we are unconventional, which means no one earns money in here, [...] and something like this doesn't exist in this city and the third thing is that we have three pillars: arts, culture and politics and take clear positions. (Group discussion, ARRF, p10)

The Political and Cultural Centre clearly marks itself out as being democratic, alternative and arts- and politics-focused and the ARP consisted an exhibition about the young people, the group, the centre, and the centre's activities, in order to receive feedback from visitors. Most of the learning from the Political and Cultural Centre's ARP project is about the ways in which the young people progressed, individually and collectively, in the 'doing of the ARP'. However, what is interesting for the current section is an exploration of the ways in which the Political and Cultural Centre's democratic and non-hierarchical ethos seemed to clash with (their perceptions) of the researchers' agenda. Indeed, the Political and Cultural Centre's ARP is one of the few projects where there seemed to be a tension between the young people and the researchers that brought about difficulties in doing the work. The interest here is about how the young people navigated and responded to the structures that sat outside of their normal practice.

The national report on this project includes a number of examples of this tension. For example, when the young people called one of the researchers 'The EU' as a joke, which the researcher did not like. Though intended to be a joke, it implied that the young people were aware of their lesser power within the project and represented an act of subversion in the space. (See also the young people in the Box who actively subverted their leadership roles 'in jest' during the ARP.) Furthermore, the young people, though ostensibly rich in different forms of capital, were not as adept at putting together and then running a project as the researchers expected. Nonetheless, they completed the work without much additional support from the researchers. Finally, in these terms, because of a lack of resources, there was a tension between the amount of time and effort the young people in the Political and Cultural Centre were willing to invest in the work and the requirements of the researchers for outcomes and a 'product'. For this section,

the learning is concerned with engaging with a new form of participation in a changing democratic structure.

Young people making practical changes in democratic spaces

The projects explored in this section set out with the aim of making practical changes, collectively, within democratic spaces. One national report encapsulates this idea well:

[The] fundamental values for the group's vision about the new meeting place [are] inclusion, openness, cross border work and far reaching democracy. Everyone should feel welcome, regardless of age, identity- and sexual orientation, ethnicity and function – all members should be treated alike and be welcome to participate in the creation-process of both the physical and the social space (ARRG, p18, emphasis in original).

The five projects included in the sub-section on practical change-making are also relevant to other sections (for example, the Drama Group engaged with a creative project in order to communicate with an audience, but the learning here is concerned what it means for young people to do a project that is aimed, in the main, towards bringing about a practical change. In all, the five projects were working towards a form of democracy and inclusion and, importantly, collective decision-making based on working together to bring about change, trying, 'failing' and trying again.

Using the idea of participatory democracy, and its core values of creating opportunities for everyone to be part of, and to make meaningful contributions to, decision-making and broadening the range of people to whom such opportunities are available, these projects too are a form of 'making democracy':

'Participatory democracy is empowered when, under conditions of equality, inclusiveness and transparency, a communicative process based on reason (the strength of a good argument) is able to transform individual preferences and reach decisions oriented to the public good. Some of the dimensions of this definition (such as inclusiveness, equality, and visibility) echo those included in the participatory models [...] as typical of new social movements, while others (above all, the attention to the quality of communication) emerge as new concerns. First, as in the movement tradition, empowered participatory democracy is inclusive: it requires that all citizens with a stake in the decisions to be taken be included in the process and able to express their voice. This means that the deliberative process takes place under conditions of a plurality of values, where people have different perspectives on their common problems.' (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p241)

The ARPs that had a focus of making a practical change engaged with the principles of representative democracy within their groups, spaces and practices. The Youth Workers, YEF and Free Sport Association worked towards creating practices (youth workers) and spaces (YEF and Free Sport Association) that were inclusive of a wider demographic. Crucially, however, their project work involved active collaboration with others, to varying degrees, and

democratic collaboration within the group, in order to bring about change. The Drama Group and the Political and Cultural Centre collaborated in-house but no less democratically in terms of the ways in which they made decisions about change. Indeed, in the project, the Political and Cultural Centre developed upon their collaborative practice.

The learning for Partispace is around the ways in which young people who are change-focused recognise the importance of inclusivity in decision-making and 'that all citizens with a stake in the decisions to be taken be included in the process and able to express their voice' (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p241). The extent to which the young people in the ARPs were able to achieve the goals that they had set, within their democratic framework, is also key. Returning to the idea of making democracy (Blee, 2012) and working towards democratic practices, it is notable that one of the main issues faced by the young people in all five groups, and summarised in one of the national reports, is the struggle for sufficient resources for their project and sufficient recognition in their work. This involves, among other issues, interacting with bureaucracy and decision-makers in ways that are not always fruitful and often frustrating. Concluding, a national report says:

Another issue they have in common is a struggle for resources and recognition. Both groups have experienced a continuous struggle with bureaucracy, municipality and other decision makers, and in both cases bureaucratic processes and structures have impeded their participation possibilities. [...] Some of the experts raises harsh critique towards slow, complicated, bureaucratic procedures and non-supportive public structures, who instead of promoting young people's participation, in fact serves as a serious counter-acting factor. (ARRG, p.26).

In other words, despite young people's desires to be democratic and inclusive in their groups and projects, they were hampered by the formal structures within which they had to work. In this sense, and the extent to which *full* participation was possible in any of the five practical ARPs discussed here needs to be unpicked. Using Pateman's (1970) theorisation, in reference to citizens, full participation is available only when there are as many opportunities to participate as there are decisions to make. *Partial* participation, on the other hand, is more likely where 'the final power of decision rests with the management, the workers if they are able to participate, being able only in *influence that decision*' (p.70, emphasis added), cf. full participation which is a truly democratic process whereby 'each individual member of a decision-making body has *equal power* to determine that outcome of decisions' (p70-71, emphasis added). As such, and in the face of resourcing issues and bureaucratic processes, none of the three groups here achieved the full participation that they needed to bring about the intended change.

4.3. Making change: 'doing differently'

Discussion of the personal relevance of these projects, and the resilience and determination of the young people, is important. While all of the projects encountered difficulties in achieving their aims, all of the young people experienced a level of commitment to the project that is important for their own development (a secondary aim of some of the work). Indeed, many of

the young people involved in the ARPs in this chapter reflected upon their skills development and progression through their involvement in a project that was personally and subjectively meaningful to them. In this sense, the participation here is not ‘ritualistic’ but, rather, working towards ‘real empowerment’ (della Porta, 2013, p40). This idea applies to participation that is focused on socio-political change as well as participation which is concerned with practical change-making and indeed, the participation that was explored in other projects.

‘Grassroots groups make democracy anew’ (Blee, 2012, p138) and though their ‘dazzling potential [...] is rarely achieved when they seek to alter entrenched structures of power and social inequality’ (Blee, 2012, p138). The internal struggles (e.g. group dynamics) within the groups were limiting, on the one hand, in terms of what could be achieved; however, group reflections and observations within the project suggest that ‘bumping up’ against traditional and normative structures of power and politics were equally, if not more so, prohibitive.

A number of themes has emerged, then, about ‘doing politics differently’ and what, for the young people in the projects, participation means and involves. See, for example, the following excerpt from the Islamic Youth Association:

Participation in the association is experienced as a personal journey. Participation in this case is meant to be a process of personal enrichment, a process of training and growing up, an individual fulfillment, planned, acted and achieved together with peers. The objective of participation, thus, is to improve one-self, to promote fair values, to find a balance as an individual’ (ARRB, p23).

An ARP which set out to examine young people’s participation and the meanings that young people ascribed to participation perhaps best sums up these ideas:

‘Participation is a term that is difficult for young people to understand or refers to highly normative responses. So, they express more what they should do rather than what they actually do. Questions about daily practices are easier for some and the maintenance work allowed them to make the link or to value their own activities. Asking the question of their participation can send them back to their feeling of inferiority because they know the social expectations that concerns them. It is therefore a concept to use with caution.’ (ARRR, p24)

Social movements help to bring about shifts in ‘normative political thought’ (West, 2013, p157) (see, for example, the changes to political thought brought about by the global feminist movement). Crucially, ‘the activities of social movements have influenced normative political thought indirectly by extending the scope of what is regarded as political [making] clear that politics takes place outside of the institutional sphere as well within it’ (p157-158). Conceiving of the ARPs in this chapter as social movements in various forms unlocks the potential for understanding the young people’s aims, processes, and motivations, for transformative and democratic participative practices.

5. Roles and relationships: identity and positioning

The purpose of the ARP part of PARTISPACE, was to investigate what happens when young people are given the opportunity to conduct a research study, where they themselves are the “owners” of this process – what questions are asked, what do they want to achieve, what do they do to get there, what kind of help do they request, what learnings do they draw from this process, and when, where and how do this learning occur? After the completion of the ARPs, it turned out that several different scenarios emerged along the eight PARTISPACE cities. Significant factors for the development in a certain direction were for example, their choice of research-topic, the aim of the project, pre-existing relations in the group, roles taken by the involved PARTISPACE researcher and sometimes also other contributing adults (like for example a youth worker) Additionally, many of the ARPs addressed and involved people outside of the group.

The other chapters in this report, are mainly focused on learning in relation to different contexts and drivers of participation. In this chapter we switch focus to the micro-relations formed in the ARP, and how these affected the groups' internal and external interaction and their learning processes.

Methodological assumptions, considerations and clarifications

The data material consists of eight ARP case descriptions (see chart 1 below), and the analysis started with a grounded theory-coding in *NVivo* (see Charmaz 2006/2010). The coding was guided by a focus on “peer relations” in the different cases. Soon however, it became apparent that the word ‘peer’ was used quite rarely in the descriptions, at least in an explicit way. Hence, to be able to understand who regarded who as a peer, an interpretation was required. It was also found that ‘peer’ could be understood in several ways. In addition, the “peer-labelled” groups and individuals, were only *one* part of many in the social interaction of the projects. Another important part, was who the group considered as their ‘counterpart’. In some ARPs were also a ‘support function’ involved, which in some cases played a crucial role for the group process, the outcome of the project as well as the learning process. Therefore, to open up for a deeper understanding of various forms of micro-level interaction in the ARPs, and its relevance for learning processes when young people participate, the continued coding and analysis procedure was focused on how the ARP groups constructed their common work as a certain social context, as well as how they positioned themselves and others involved, due to this understanding.

Counterparts, peers and support function

In the following text, the concept ‘counterpart’ is referring to a person, group or organisation who is involved as a part in an ‘asymmetric relation’, where there is a difference in the social expectations and responsibilities of the involved actors (Goffman 1967/1982). The label ‘peer’ denotes instead a symmetrical relation, where the parts have a more equal status towards each other (*ibid.*). However, the peer-concept is also ambiguous, and in the national reports the term emerges in in different ways. Even if it in some way always signals some sort of equality between the parts of a relation (regarding for example age, status or ability), it is also used to term different kinds of equal relationships, such as friendship, collegiality or a representative

relationship. In the two latter cases, the friendship-element is diminished, and more than as a label of the strength of the bond between individuals, it refers to parts being on the same side of a power-relation – the peers are equal in relation to a counterpart, with whom they are *not* equal.

In the ARPs, the ‘support function’, was usually held by a PARTISPACE researcher. In some case, was also a youth worker or an NGO-worker involved. This function can also be understood as a part of an ‘asymmetric relationship’, but unlike the counterpart, the support function position itself as being “on the same side” as the ARP group, and they perceive it as their task to support the group, in terms of both content and process. In the ARPs, it seems like the support function have varied in intensity. In some cases, the support function has taken an active part in the group’s work, through all the stages of the process, while in others, the support has been given more passively and mainly taken place during the start-up and the reflection phase.

Identities, subject positions and discursive orders

After the initial open coding, some key themes were chosen. This further analysis was conducted with a constructionist approach, and while the analysis progressed towards higher levels of abstraction, the terms ‘identity’, ‘subject position’, discourse order and ‘manoeuvrable space’, became increasingly significant.

In the chapter, the concept of ‘identity’ is comprehended as a discursive phenomenon, and ‘the subject’ is understood as equivalent with “subject positions in a discursive structure”. (Laclau & Mouffe (1985/2008: 115). This reasoning is based on Lacan’s theory of ‘subject perception’ (1977/1989), where he argues that in discourses, there are always certain positions that the subjects can take or be placed into by others, and linked to those positions are instructions and expectations about certain behaviours. ‘Subject positions’ can also be linked to a particular ‘identity category’, and in order to be perceived by others as a ‘member’, the subject must show the characteristics and behaviours associated with this category. In this way ‘identity’ can be understood as – identifying with one of the subject positions offered by the discourses.

Fairclough (1989/2001: 31–32) uses the term ‘subject position’ in a similar way – to describe individuals in relation to a certain social and ‘discursive order’. To hold a ‘subject position’ means, according to him, to do, or not do, certain things, and to perform in line with the rights and obligations associated with it. Applied on, for example, a youth centre-context, a number of ‘social spaces’ can be connected (maybe a café-furnished recreation area, group activities, staff meetings and coffee breaks), a set of recognisable ‘social roles’ (youth centre director, youth workers, visiting youth) and a number of ‘approved activities’ and ‘goals’ (for example, music-playing, interest groups, baking, learning and maintenance of rules of conduct). Focusing on the subject positions, it can be said that the directors, youth workers and visiting youth “are what they do” – it is the discourse order of the youth centre that set up the subject positions, and it is only by holding on to these, that the individuals become youth workers and youth centre visitors. Thus, it is the social structure, in the form of social conventions, that determine the discourse, and only by retaining in these predetermined subject positions, can they continue to be part of the social structure. The reason why Fairclough (ibid.) rather uses the term ‘subject position’ instead of the more common concept ‘social role’, is what he

describes as “its successful ambiguity” (ibid: 32). Grammatically, ‘subject’ stands for the active party in a clause, the one who acts, but in English (and French), the word may also refer to someone who is in a subordinate position in relation to an authority and is passively being formed into something. This dual meaning has an important function for understanding the social subject’s ‘manoeuvrable space’ – they are limited by the subject positions offered by the current discourse order and are in this sense passive, but at the same time, this limitation is also what enables them to perform as social actors. In other words, this restriction is a prerequisite for social action. Social subjects are creative and active, and uses discourses as resources, combining them in a variety of ways to meet many different situations, conditions and requirements. This is, Fairclough argues, a most creative activity. This view of the relationship between subject and structure has resemblance with Messerschmidt’s (1993, 1997) theory of ‘structured action’, where he points out that social structures do not exist in themselves beyond ordinary everyday life. Structures are produced and reproduced, and are the result of individual actors’ actions, and without such actions, the structures would no longer exist. At the same time, the actions of the individual actors, are constantly influenced by and linked to the surrounding structures. For example, if all the youth centres were to be closed down, not only would concrete activities disappear, but also the social structure surrounding the action ‘visiting a youth centre’.

Aim and research questions

The ARPs took place in different organisational contexts and involved a number of interacting social actors. To be able to conduct the AR within the ARP frame and other surrounding structures, the participants had to engage in a conceptualising process where they constructed and defined their own context as a specific discursive order, answering questions like for example – where are we, what are we doing and what do we want to achieve by doing this? They also had to understand themselves as a group in a certain way and related to this a number of ‘subject positions’ that emerged, which were taken, invited to, forced on, accepted or rejected.

The chapter aims at highlighting the groups’ different understanding of themselves as a group in the ARP context, from before they became an ARP group and until they finished their project, and at analysing how their conceptions of the discursive order and the interlinked subject positions, affected the groups’ work and learning processes. To be able to identify different positioning-patterns, the empirical material (the descriptions of the ARP groups and processes) are addressed with the following questions: in this context – who is considered as ‘member of the group’, who is related to as ‘peer’, and who is presented as ‘counter-part’. The questions about reflection and learning, are then discussed in the ending section *Discussion and reflection*.

Presentation of the cases

In the chapter, the selected cases are presented in terms of the groups’ closeness to or distance from a larger organisational setting before the ARP process started – whether they are a (youth) part of a larger organisation, an autonomous association or a group of visitors within a certain institutional setting. The analysis is process-oriented and follows how the cases construct and reconstruct themselves and their surrounding relations before, during and after ARP. For each

case, a possible understanding of how they frame themselves and their co-actors in the process is suggested, in different peer- and counterpart-positions, depending on the context, and how this in turn modifies the discourse orders, which allows for new, or somehow altered, subject positions to be formed.

Eight ARP cases are selected for the analysis, due to their difference in organisational belonging and their primary relational focus in the ARP. In chart 1 below the cases are given a brief description according to these variables.

Chart 1: Presentation of the selected cases

Name of the ARP case	Abb.	City	Connections to a larger organisation	Primary relational focus in the ARP
The Political Youth Association	PYA	Zürich	Closely	Internal
The Islamic Youth Association	IYA	Bologna	Closely	Internal and external
Drama Group, Gothenburg	DG	Gothenburg	Autonomous	Internal
The Free Sport Association	FSA	Gothenburg	Autonomous	Internal and external
The Girls Group	GG	Zürich	Loosely	External
The Young Entrepreneur Association	YEA	Plovdiv	Loosely	Internal
The Box	BOX	Manchester	Loosely	Internal and external
The HIDDEN project	HID	Manchester	Loosely	Internal and external

Most of the ARP groups have had a history as a group, before the beginning of the ARP work. The members knew each other from before and had developed ties of collegiality and sometimes friendship. In other ARP groups the ties between the members appears to not have lasted as long, at least not in this particular group constellation, and some of them do not seem to have existed as a group at all before the ARPs. In these cases, the members have been recruited to take part in the ARP by the Partispace researcher or a collaborating adult youth worker. The unifying components in these cases, is that the members, at the time of the ARP start up-phase, were visiting the same institutional setting, or the same school or NGO-setting.

Results and analysis

Accept from all participants being young, the analysed ARP groups are in many aspects quite disparate. The differences can be detected in everything from duration, surrounding structural context, internal organisation and aim of the ARPs. In the following, the cases are presented based on their organisational attachment and closeness to a larger institutional setting.

5.1. Closely connected to a larger institutional structure

All of the ARP groups are in some way linked to a surrounding structure. Yet, some of them are more explicitly embedded in a certain institutional context than others, as for example the Political Youth Association in Zürich. As a political youth organisation, it is linked to the political system in the city and region where they operate, and in a wider sense to the political system of Switzerland. In a similar way, The Islamic Youth Association in Bologna is embedded in a larger institutional setting, but instead of politics, their unifying component is

religion and a shared sense of marginality as they negotiate dual identities. On one level the Islamic Youth Association are connected to other people going to the same mosque, and in a wider sense to the national and global Muslim-community.

Peer-to-peer relations

The members of these groups also share the position of being “the young people” of their institutional setting. This belonging serves as a decisive factor for whom the groups relate to as ‘we are on the same side’ or ‘we as peers’.

What is IYA to me?” To me, IYA is positive competition, as it's said by Allah subhanahu wa t'a'ala' in its holy book [Arabic name of the book]; it is as a big family in which we all love each other, it represents a world of love, a world for young people. (Video contest, IYA, ARRB, p.11)

As in the excerpt above, in its broadest sense the category ‘young people’, can be equivalent with a certain age-span, and consequently *all young people* in a city, a country or in the world can be regarded as ‘peers’. However, in this meaning, “to be peers” only means to be ‘equals’ in the sense of age. In other aspects, the category “young people” can contain a number of different internal power-relations and social roles. For the Political Youth Association, the similarity in age makes it possible for them to place themselves in the position as *representatives* for other young people in the same region.

The aim of the political youth association is to represent the political interests of the youth of the canton of Zürich towards the parliament, the government and the public in general. The association describes itself as the voice of the youth (Political Youth Association, ARRZ, p.2).

In turn, this places other young people in the position of *the represented*, and this particular set of subject positions, makes it possible for one part to be “the voice” of the other.

The support function

In the Political Youth Association project, it seems like the group were quite self-driven, and that the researchers participated mainly in the start-up and the reflection phase. In the Islamic Youth Association project, the researcher took an active part in the group processes and led two workshops, where all the Islamic Youth Association members were invited to participate. In the first one, the Islamic Youth Association members were given opportunity to individually formulate what participation means to them, and to share life-stories with each other about times when they have felt excluded or belittled respectively, felt as belonging to a community. In this context of mutual sharing, the researcher can be said to have taken the position of a *mandated facilitator*, and the group members took part as *mandating co-participants*. In the second workshop the ARP group formulated a research-question – to attract new members to the association – and for this purpose they produced a video.

Counterpart-relation

As part of the ‘young collective’ within an institutional structure, the two cases share a common counterpart in “the adults” within their respective setting, from which they encounter both opposition and recognition. In the Zürich National Report, for example, there is a description

of how the Political Youth Association is aiming for the official recognition as a youth parliament of the canton of Zürich through the council of government.

Besides this, the two groups also have other counterparts. In the Political Youth Association case, the ARP group consist of the board members in the organisation, and in their ARP project they are aiming at getting the more passive members of the association to be more active, which entails an internal counterpart to emerge. In the national report their identified problem is described in the following way:

Nevertheless, the vast majority of association members tends to be passive and not very engaged in the association's bodies, general meetings, the board or the different working groups. The board members consider these 'passive' association members as missed resources and potentials. Regarding the tight time resources of the board members, the 'passive' association members would represent a helpful and relieving support. [---] Through higher commitment of the association members, new resources could be generated or time resources of the board members can be spared and used more specifically. [---] Finally, it can be stated that the board of the political youth association decided to elaborate the research question out of own interest. The results allow them to get an image of their members' needs, which should ensure the continuance of the association as well as the succession of the association as the different roles of the board members and the membership are bound to a certain age (Political Youth Association, ARRZ, p.6)).

When framing their research-problem in this way, the ARP group (the board members) seem to form a discursive order aiming at solving internal problems (lack of activity or engagement and lack of successors among their own group of Political Youth Association members). As leaders of the organisation, the ARP group here seems to speak with the asymmetric voice of a superordinate *problem owner*, and the “passive” members are addressed as subordinate *tools for problem solving*. However, while planning for and conducting the ARP, not much of this “demanding speech” remains. Instead the discursive order is transformed into a marked-like “consumer survey-context”, where the board members act as *survey conductors* and the members are positioned as *survey participants*.

The Islamic Youth Association has counterparts in the adult-controlled parts of their own organisation, and in the rest of the adult Muslim-community. Another counterpart mentioned, is the non-Islamic society they live in, which they feel often treats the members in the group in a prejudiced way. In many of the ARP discussions in the group, the members share memories of these kind of incidents. They also talk a lot about, and give support to each other, concerning how to navigate among non-Muslim friends and in society as a whole, with what they perceive as a double identity or a *hybrid position*, with one leg in the Muslim community, and one in the Italian society. This is something mentioned several times in the National Report, and it seems like the question about Muslim girls wearing the veil or not, is of special symbolic meaning to the group – of both exclusion and inclusion.

The members of one of the teams, in particular, used this approach to account for their everyday life experience as young Muslim girls who want to react to the western concepts of veiled woman as a victim, poor, isolated creature politically and culturally. For them, taking part in the IYA seems to be a way to better handle a fierce everyday stigmatization (Islamic Group Association, ARRB, p.12)

The question of representing women with or without veil, for example, became fundamental in the discussion. Through the video, the IYA girls wanted to speak to a prospective Muslim girl, inviting her to attend the meeting of the association, feeling totally free to choose to wear the veil or not; they want to let her know that they “will not judge” her if she opts for not wearing it. In the young people's words: “Oh, right! For instance, it happens that when I talk with girls I know, maybe because they don't wear the veil they don't feel comfortable, and they think that [the Islamic Group Association] is only a place for girls wearing the veil.” (Vera, Islamic Group Association, ARRB, p.19)

The descriptions of the difficulties with the hybrid identity or position, gives a picture of a two-fronts dilemma. On one hand they have to handle the values associated with their Muslim identity and on the other, the value-system of the Italian society. The Islamic Youth Association members seem to be united in their sense of belonging to both moral-systems, but also to be exposed to social pressure when moral perceptions of the two systems collide. When this happens, the overall pressure seems to cause a narrow and difficult position, which crops the individual's manoeuvrable space and opportunities for identity-making. According to Laclau and Mouffe (2008), when an individual in this way is exposed to too many different and contradictory identity offers (or imperatives), the subject is exposed to 'over-determination'. However, this circumstance also holds a possibility of resistance. The subject does not have to accept this only as a passive victim – the multitude of identity offers, provide the subject with a possibility to negotiate and renegotiate their self-conception and to develop strategies for complementary self-images (ibid.).

To be active, to participate, doesn't mean just to come here and say your idea, but it also means to free ourselves from stereotypes, [...]. To feel included, from coming into a place that seems boring at first glance, but then let you to discover the wonder, the amazement of staying together (Abdul, Islamic Group Association, ARRB, p.16).

Based on this understanding, when sharing experiences with each other, the Islamic Youth Association members can be said to use the 'hybrid position' as a connecting factor, which opens up opportunities to create new identities. In the 'we-constellation' of the Islamic Youth Association, not only can the members support each other, they can also commonly resist what they perceive as far too restrictive decrees within the two conflicting moral systems they must navigate between.

The ARP impact on the group and the learning process

More than having reached their initial goal (to activate passive members), the Political Youth Association group's ARP appears to have contributed to a changed view of their relation to the members of the association. The survey led to a broadened understanding of the motives behind the membership, that the majority were members primarily to obtain information about the Swiss political system, and that they had no intention to participate more actively in the association-work. This information seem to have made the board members see themselves in a new light, which served as an incentive to reformulate themselves and their function in order to harmonise more with the wishes of their members – from regarding themselves as “problem owners” and the members as “tools for problem solving”, the ARP seems to have contributed to a reconstruction of their self-image, where being a channel for dissemination of non-party political information, was considered to be of greater importance than before.

The reflective ARP workshops in the first part of the Islamic Youth Association project, seem to have brought the members closer and to have made them more visible to each other as individuals. This also seems to have had an empowering effect, which was manifested in the second part of the ARP, where the group produced a video to attract more members. Even if the Islamic Youth Association to some extent shared the ARP aim with the Political Youth Association (handling members), their initial incentives for doing this were different. More than solving a problem of their own, the Islamic Youth Association project had an inviting approach – they wanted to share with others something they perceived as good and supportive. In this way, they acted more as *owners of a supportive community* who invited *guests* in a similar situation, to share this social space.

5.2. Autonomous groups

In this section cases are discussed that describe themselves as autonomous or more or less independent in relation to to their surrounding structure. Two examples of this kind are *Drama Group* and the *Free Sport Association*, both from Gothenburg.

At the time of the ARP, the Drama Group was right in the middle of a transition phase. Due to the members age (they had all turned eighteen) they had to leave the institutional setting of *The Cultural School* of Gothenburg, where they had been a group for some years. The group had decided to instead continue as an autonomous theatre association – a change they described with the metaphor “like moving away from home”:

We were more or less thrown out from a secure place, from having a confident leader, and then just bang, now we are independent, a bit like moving away from home (Group discussion, Drama Group, ARRG, p.8)

The formation process of this new setting, and the learning from it, was also the focus of the groups' ARP. Simultaneously, the group was involved in writing a play together:

The group was [...] brainstorming, discussing and shaping various themes they wanted to address. Their themes more or less always evolved around social relations and issues with a socio-political character, being a critique

*of the perceived injustices and “hot issues” of the current, human condition
(Drama Group, ARRG, p.4)*

The Free Sport Association has been an autonomous sport association for some years, and their primary activity is to train parkour together. In administrative meaning, the Free Sport Association is a member of the *Swedish Gymnastic Association*, which in turn is part of the *Swedish Sport Federation*. In their daily activities though, this is of less importance than their network of other action sport associations. Many of the members share earlier experiences of lack of support in doing their activity, and in having troubles making themselves heard in different sport contexts. In the Free Sport Association they have used this knowledge to instead create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

*We know what it feels like to be a minority, to not get the support we need as individuals, to not be organised enough, and things like that. [---]. I have many times felt quite alienated in contexts like this. And I have talked to other practitioners who share this feeling, and who have come the same conclusion – if we've had a hard time making ourselves heard, then we shouldn't let anyone else go through the same process. [---] And that's why we don't have any age limits in our association. Everybody can train together. That's how we want it to be. We don't want to discriminate anyone. Everybody should feel welcome. It's really quite logical that you ought to help each other
(Kadar, Free Sport Association, ARRG, p.16).*

At the time of the ARP start up, the Free Sport Association faced a big problem – the premises of their current training facility were to be demolished, and they were in great need of a new place. In their ARP, they wanted to face this problem, but also to develop their ideas about a new kind of meeting place. In their vision, this should be a place where many sorts of groups with different interest and activities, could come together “under one roof”. Instead of common activities, the place should be unified by a common participatory ideology of democracy, openness, collaboration, knowledge- and experience-exchange, sustainability and self-maintenance – what they framed as “creating a fully democratic meeting-place”.

Peer-to-peer relations

The Drama Group and the Free Sport Association have a similar conception about who were regarded as “we” in the ARP context – the members of their own association, but the disparity in duration, size (5 versus 600 members) and activities, brought about different starting positions for the two groups. The Free Sport Association has been around for quite a while and have developed a functioning task division (such as board members, trainers, practioners etc.). They have also created a flexible infrastructure for managing and encouraging various innovative side-project, which benefit the members or young people in general. This allows for the members to quite easily combine or shift between positions related to the everyday maintenance of the association and more temporary assignments. In their ARP a smaller group of Free Sport Association members was involved in the ARP process. Their ARP goal was to develop a basic structure for the meeting-place vision, build up a network of interested groups, investigate different implementation scenarios based on various funding possibilities and to

produce a presentation material to show potential funders. Thereafter (after the ARP), the ARP group will present their ideas to the rest of the Free Sport Association members. The further and more detailed development of the idea they will then be done together. To be able to proceed with the ARP, the project group needed to form a new *temporary collegial work alliance* in relation to each other. The rest of the Free Sport Association members was in this scenario positioned as *denominators* or *future beneficiaries*, and in relation to them, the ARP group took the position as *mandated investigators and constructors*.

The Drama Group, on the other hand, consisted of a small group of individuals, who had just recently left an institutional setting as *co-students*, and without a predefined division of roles and tasks, they entered the setting of an autonomous theatre group as *equals*. Soon it turned out that the commitment to the group and to their common tasks, and the motivational factors behind the commitment, varied between the members. One problem they had to deal with was in what way they were equals – as in *colleagues* in a working process or as in *friends* doing something fun together. When also confronted with problems like – who is responsible for which part, and who has the right, and to what extent, to make decisions for the whole group – the idea about how this equality was supposed to be manifested in their concrete work together, was challenged.

Because this thing, each of us had responsibility for a certain part, and already there we had ten different understandings about what this meant. Someone perhaps thought “then I have a hundred percent ownership over this part, and I decide exactly what everyone will do and I can direct it”. And someone else perhaps thought: “I can improvise, and I can also improvise in your parts”. So, there were very, very different perspectives (Johanna, Drama Group, ARRG, p6).

Counterpart relations

Being in the middle of a transformation process, the Drama Group were probably more occupied with sorting out their internal relations, than to define a distinct counterpart outside of this context. However, in some sense the adult-led organisation they had just left, can be referred to as a counter-part, a part that no longer provided them with help. Another briefly mentioned counterpart is the “theatre officials” the group was in contact with, who they perceived as reluctant to let the Drama Group in into their community. From the Drama Group perspective as *support-seekers*, both of these counterparts can be understood as *potential support-givers*, who rejected their request for membership. This put the Drama Group members in an *excluded* position – from the Cultural school due to their age, and from the theatre officials, due to their lack of experience.

When practising parkour outdoor on the streets, the Free Sport Association members sometimes encounter people (usually adults), who do not agree with the parkour-way of viewing the public space as a “potential playground” to be used in multiple ways. Depending on perspective, this situation can be viewed as battle between a *rightfully annoyed public* raising complaints about a group of young *rule-offenders*, alternatively between “*red tapists*” and *creative urban space users*. Another counterpart for the Free Sport Association, is found

in the bureaucratic system. As a sport association with many young members, the Free Sport Association gets some financial support from the municipality. However, to be able to develop the association further, finding a new training facility and to turn this into a “democratic meeting-place”, this support is far from enough. To be able to fulfil this vision, they had for a long time tried to reach out to other possible funding systems, and in this process they had encountered many obstacles.

I've been to a lot of meetings with politicians and officials and told about our ideas. And I always get the same response: “My God, this is fantastic!” They have given a lot of cred. And at first, I was really happy about their appreciation, and thought: “Wow, now something might happen! But it never did. I have returned and told the same thing over and over again. [...]. I've told them: “I don't care about your compliments – you need to do something as well!” And if you're not able to do it, then I still need a way to do it!” [...], it's like – you don't want to lose your money on something new, you rather lose them on something old. So, when I come and present our ideas, it's as they think: “What if this new thing isn't profitable, and what if someone would hold me responsible and say – how could you be persuaded into this totally new thing?” But still it's okay to lose 20 million on an old arena every year. They don't reason the same way about new and old things. I think it's double standard, like you don't dare to place yourself in the danger zone with a new thing, but to make the same wasteful investment every year on something old, that's not a problem (Kadar, Free Sport Association, ARRG, p.22).

The situation described above, could in one way be understood as an arena for citizen dialogue and a possibility for grass-root political influence. Just like the Drama Group, the Free Sport Association group can be seen here as *support-seekers* reaching out to *potential support-givers*. The response they got, however, was of a more ambiguous kind. When arguing about their case, the Free Sport Association members were on one hand welcomed as *engaged and innovate young citizens*, that deserves to be rewarded for all their efforts. But when it turned out that this reward, time after time, just contained appealing words, the group left with a perception of being “played” and of being part in an already predetermined match. The indefinites about the context, also left them with a feeling that the discussion was never meant as a *means* for coming to a decision about financial support or not – but in fact was the very *goal* of the event – politicians paying attention to young peoples' ideas.

The ARP impact on the group process

In its new setting as an autonomous group, with all that this meant, the ARP in Drama Group, largely coincided with the group's actions and their image of who they were. And when this process did not correspond enough with the individual member's expectations, both the group and the ARP process began to decay. Therefore, instead of writing a play and forming a functioning infrastructure for the group, the ARP learning outcomes, had more to do with re-orientation and an increased clarity about group processes.

It has been analytical, in a good way, we have been thinking about our work more than we would have done if we would have been outside of this. Then I think we would have taken every week as it came. But now we got the opportunity to tie together what we are doing, and perhaps become more conscious about what it is that we want with ourselves (Johanna, Drama Group, ARRG, p12).

In Free Sport Association, the ARP entrance conditions were quite different. More than being the main activity, as in the Drama Group, their ARP was like a *special project*, peripheral to the group's primary activities. They already had a solid organisation of roles and tasks, and their existing infrastructure for initiatives of this kind, facilitated their ARP process.

5.3. Loosely connected to an institutional setting

Compared to the groups described above, other ARP participants had a looser connection to the institutional setting where the project took place. More than being a well-defined group with explicit boundaries for membership, the participants seem more to have identified themselves as *co-visitors* of the same institutional setting.

For the *Girls Group* in Zürich, the setting for their ARP, was a youth centre. In the national report the participants relational status, before the ARP, is described as "a peer-group or informal group; regarding the fact that they have no formal structure nor concrete goals or aims". The girls met frequently at the youth club to discuss important issues, and in their ARP, they wanted to expand their knowledge about bullying. The reason for choosing this topic, they described as being something they had heard a lot about and that concerned them. They also wanted to spread information and "give lessons" to offenders about the severe consequences for bullying victims. All through the ARP process the group had support from a youth worker at the youth centre.

Another example is the ARP done by the *Youth Entrepreneurship Foundation* (YEF) in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. The main aim of this association is to stimulate citizens' activity and to establish contacts with other youth NGOs. They also cooperate with city authorities. In the concrete work with the ARP, the YEF members took part as *initiators* and later on as *facilitators*, and the ARP group consisted of a group of students involved in courses at the YEF. The idea for the ARP – to make plans for how to change the design of a schoolyard, which were perceived as very boring and neglected by the students – came from one of the participants who attended the school in question.

More than the other groups, the *Box* and *Hidden*, both from Manchester, represents groups where experience of exclusion and social exposure served as the unifying component for their ARPs (see chapter 2 and 3). The *Box* engages young homeless men, and the *Hidden*, involves young asylum-seekers. Just as the other ARP groups in this section, the participants of the *LAN* and the *Hidden*, was not a formal group before the ARP, but were visitors at two non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Both ARP groups started with in-depth conversations about the meaning of 'participation', where the participants shared narratives about experiences and emotions related to not being recognised and admitted to participate or not being accounted for to participate as equals in the "we of the Manchester society". In both cases the Partispace

researcher, together with an NGO-worker, put together the ARP groups, and had, all through the working-process, a support function in relation to the group.

Peer-to-peer relations

In Girls Group's ARP aim-formulation, the girls presented an understanding of bullying as a widespread social problem among youth. They also expressed a belief that more information about the negative effects of bullying could reduce its occurrence. It is also possible to discern a solidarity understanding of other young people affected by bullying, as a "we as peers". To further explore the meaning of 'bullying' among people in general, the Girls Group conducted a survey, where they asked people passing by on the streets about this phenomenon. To do this, the internal relations in the group, needed to be structured and task focused. So, when working on their project, they seem to have bracketed their friendship relation for a while, and grouped themselves in a *temporary collegial work alliance*, similar to the ARP group in the Free Sport Association. Out on the streets, conducting their study, the girls took the positions of *survey conductors*, which placed their interviewees in the position of *survey participants*.

In the Young Entrepreneurship Association project, two young men, both students at the high school in question, took the lead in the ARP. Just as in the Free Sport Association and Girls Group projects, it seems that they perceived the ARP as entering a 'project-context', and therefore grouped themselves in a *temporary collegial work alliance*. The identified the problem they wanted to solve, were perceived as of concern of *all* student at the school, whom they presumably related to as "we as peers". After having gathered necessary background information and had some initial meetings with the counterparts (see below), next step for the group was to engage the rest of the students at the school, gather their ideas about how to change the schoolyard and get their approval for proceeding with the ideas. For this purpose, the ARP group organised a number of meetings where ideas were raised, and pros and cons were weighed against each other. Finally, these discussions ended up in an agreement to design "a recreational park with various facilities". After having summarised the emerging ideas in a 3D-visualisation, the ARP group interviewed some fellow-school students about the proposal. This was met very positively and other students promised to help out with future activities. In the described context, the ARP group can be said to have addressed their fellow-students as *beneficiaries*, as well as *mandate-givers* and *potential collaborators*. Just as in the Free Sport Association case, this approach made it possible for the ARP group to act as *mandated investigators* and *constructors*.

Similar to the working process in the Islamic Youth Association (see above), the initial discussion about participation in the Box and Hidden groups, seems to have had a re-positioning effect on the participant's internal relations – from being more anonymous to each other (more or less), a mutual sense of belonging grew forth, and a new "we" was emerging, as in – we in *this group*.

Group 1 seem to feel with each other that allowed a freedom that had not been present before. Voices are louder, people are laughing, and everyone is moving with ease [...]. Ideas [...] are expressed excitedly and everyone laughs as we try to reach agreement on what to do. [...] There is a

camaraderie and equality and a sense that this is a 'safe space' (Hidden, ARRM, p.16).

Counter-parts

From the Girls Groups set up of their ARP, it is possible to discern some of their understanding of the discursive order where bullying takes place. It includes three positions – the *bully*, the *bullied* and the *witness of bullying*. In the APR the girls seem to place themselves in the last position. The bullied part is positioned as the *potential beneficiary*, and the bullies as the counterpart, who they want to address with information in order to make them change their behaviour. In this context the girls position themselves as potential *educators*.

Early on in the working-processes of the Young Entrepreneurship Association project, two counterparts were identified – the principal of the school and the municipality of Plovdiv, who owned the land where the school was located. The ARP group set up a number of meetings with them, and they both declared a readiness to back the initiative, and to assist both legally and administratively. In many respect, the Young Entrepreneurship Association case is reminiscent with the Free Sport Association case, described above. They both started with identifying a problem related to a physical space (lack of training facility/meeting place and boring schoolyard), and on behalf of a collective they wanted to create a welcoming social space for activities and recreation. Also, to solve the problem, both of them initiated negotiating discussions with municipal counterparts. Confusion regarding contexts-factors, such as what position they were talking from and the purpose of the meetings, meant however, that the Free Sport Association group left with a feeling of not having been listened to as a full-fledged party in the discussion. In the Young Entrepreneurship Association case this process seemed to have been much more frictionless – as *support-seekers*, the ARP group asked the decision-makers (*potential support-givers*) for support, and they agreed to this.

The counterparties identified in the Box and Hidden projects, are not as much related to the ARP work process, as to the excluding surrounding society on a general level – the unwillingness of people in general to acknowledge and include people in a socially exposed positions, into the community. In order to change this, both groups wanted to use their ARP, to raise public awareness by sharing experiences of homelessness, respectively being an asylum-seeker. When the discussions in the groups turned in this direction, it seems like yet another “we” started to emerge – the “we” as possible *representatives* for people in the same situation.

It was these discussions about their feelings of marginalisation, in terms of participation, that started the group talking about what they would like to do together for the ARP. Rather than hiding from the/ a society that stigmatises them, they wanted to integrate and to participate along with everyone else (Hidden, ARRM, p.11).

In the ARP planning-process Hidden group decided to divide themselves into two subgroups, who wanted to explore different options for the ARP. In one of the groups this resulted in a play called *Faceless*, which later on became a film. In this way, the participants wanted to tell about the feeling of invisibility of the asylum-seeker.

The Box project turned into an outdoor art exhibition with viewing-boxes, where various difficult aspects of the life as a homeless person were portrayed. The exhibition visitors were taken on a walk along-tour guided by a Box-participant, where they were invited to literally “peer into their lives” and to see the world from a homeless person’s perspective. During the tour, the Box-guide also shared his own lived experiences from being homeless, with the spectators.

In the case of the walking tours and film exhibition, there was a sense of empowerment for the men from being positioned as an expert in their own lives. In this sense, the power of their testimonies came from their authority of experience and whilst audience members responded positively (Box, ARRM, p.5).

This conceptualisation, of the discursive order where the social exclusion takes place, share similarities with the Girls Group case above. Three parts are involved – *the excluder, the excluded and the witness of the exclusion*. In both groups, the ARP participants identified themselves as in the position of the *excluded*. More than raising direct claims about rights to “the excluders”, it seems like the participants wanted to reach out on an empathic level and address the public as *witnesses of exclusion* and maybe as *potential supporters*. Many of the participants also shared experiences of being “handled” by authorities in different ways, and of being in a subordinate and more or less powerless position in such situations – what in the National Report is framed as being “done to”. In the groups was rooted a strong will not to reproduce this kind of power relationship within their ARPs. Instead of “done to”, they wanted to create a setting where a “done with” was possible.

The ARP impact on the group process and the learning

The project-form of the work in the Girls Group and the Young Entrepreneurship Association wherein they formed a temporal collegial work-alliance, seem to have been an effective way for completing the task they had in mind for their ARPs. Although both of the groups seem to have improved their knowledge and skills in many areas, after the ARP ended, this seem to have been more or less a “closed chapter” for the participants, at least for them as a group. They moved on with their lives, and probably found new things to be engaged in. In the Girls Group, the working process was paused due to the summer holiday. They had planned to resume the work in the autumn, finishing the film-production together and have a last joint reflexion-session. However, at this meeting only one girl showed up, and the date needed to be rescheduled. The youth worker involved in the project interpreted this sudden decrease in the girls’ interest and commitment-level, as a sign of “how easily and quickly the relevance of issues can change at this age” (ARRZ, p.19). The Young Entrepreneurship Association had a similar end – the project initiators had all graduated from the school and had went to Germany to study.

The Box project seem to have had a powerful impact on the self-image of the men involved and appears to have given them an increased sense of personal agency in the face of disempowering circumstances (White 2000, Combs & Freeman 2014). The process of from being ‘done to’ to being ‘done with’, was manifested in the ARP – in the walking tours the

guiding men took the positions of *insider-narrators* of a world unknown to the visitors and as *experts* of their own lives. When responding with empathy and recognition, the spectators became *outside-witnesses*, who had a possibility to confirm and acknowledge the men's told life-experiences. The recognition from an 'outside-witness' can sometimes be a valuable element when reconstructing problematic life-stories and in a repositioning-process from people viewing themselves as "being the problem, to being persons with a relation to a problem that affects them in a negative way (ibid.). The process of acknowledgment that the men encountered, is described in the national report as a "sense of empowerment for the men". The recognition from the 'outside witnesses' seem however to only have served as an igniting spark for the men involved, and when the ARP ended the sense of recognition, seem to more and more have merged into a feeling of vain.

Although parts of the process were empowering there was also a sense that the experience made the men acutely aware of their own powerlessness. Furthermore, whilst raising awareness, there is the reality that it was likely their involvement would not dramatically change the precariousness nature of their lives or secure more stable and positive experiences of the job market (Box, ARRM, p.6).

Also, in Hidden project, the ARP process seem to have affected the participants in many ways. According to the National Report, the possibility to collectively explore their lived experiences of being a young person seeking asylum in Manchester, and to creatively express common emotions of invisibility, exclusion and shame, had an empowering effect to them, as individuals and as a group. The participants also showed a high degree of commitment in relation to both the work-process and to the group. Knowing their efforts should result in something that would make it possible for them speak to the public about their experiences, made them feel as part of something important. And just as in the Box project, the participants seem to have started a collective process of re-positioning themselves.

Through the Project, they found belonging, emancipation, citizenship, and, despite a consistent and often unspoken sense of their own precarity, they had an undeniable sense of fighting back and fighting on (Hidden, ARRM, p.17).

It seems like Hidden-participants entrance into the ARP group setting, became a turning point, and had an externalising effect in the participant's conception of themselves. According to Foucault (1977), when internalising dominant cultural narratives about who we are, and act accordingly to those, we take part in a power-process of self-control. The more the positions offered from these cultural narratives frames people as "problems", the more they start to think about themselves as 'problems', and not as people *affected* by a problem (White 2000, Combs & Freeman 2014). In Hidden group the internalised image of the asylum-seeker as *invisible and without rights* were challenged – in the eyes of the other group members, the participants were no longer invisible. In their sharing of experiences and expressing emotions related to this position, it seems like its power over their lives was reduced, which made it possible for new positions to emerge. By telling their stories about the people and structures who put them in

this excluded place, they seem to more and more position themselves as people *affected by a problem worth resisting* (ibid.).

The story about Hidden ends in the National report, when the film is completed. The young people are then engaged in planning how to exhibit their work, and they are clear about wanting to show it to as many people as possible. The story about the encounter with the viewers of the film, is thus yet to be told, and also if this had the same de-powering effect on the participants as in the Box project, or if the events took a different path.

5.4. Roles and relationships: summary and discussion

Most of the ARP cases presented in this chapter, are based on a *wish for a changed state*, in some regard. The motives for participating in this change-work seem also quite often to be associated with ethical values – something is sensed as wrong, unfair or immoral, and many of the participants seem to perceive the engagement in the ARP as a chance to solve a problem or to give remedy to a shortage-situation (such as lack of members, social spaces or compassion and understanding in society). To be able to do something about the problematic situation, the groups needed to *agree on a common approach* in their ARP work. They also had to make a preliminary definition about *what or who constituted the problem*. However, to define a social situation, a problem and a possible solution, cannot be done in an objective and neutral way – certain discourse orders, subject positions and identity-offers are inevitably produced and reproduced (Fairclough 1989/2001, Messerschmidt 1993, 1997). So, when defining “the problem”, the groups also became involved in defining for example, the social context, themselves, their actions and other involved actors.

This social definition-work, has been the focus in this chapter, and the analysis has shown that through the ARP process, different positioning patterns have occurred. In this section, some of the most recurring or in other way interesting formation-patterns are highlighted and discussed.

“We” in the group – friendly equals or task-oriented colleagues?

A challenge all ARP groups had to face, were to form themselves in a functional way in relation to the aim of their project. Depending on the context, it seems like the groups placed themselves on a continuum from ‘friendly equals’ to ‘task-oriented colleagues’.

Closest to the ‘friendly equals’-pole was the Drama Group members. They entered the ARP work as equals in all respects, and never really managed to transform into something else. For the working process, this meant some disadvantages. All through the ARP process, they dealt with problems in setting up commonly accepted boundaries between their friendship and work relations. In the absence of a negotiated task-division, it also happened that individual members took initiatives, that the rest of the group did not agree on, which each time meant a halt in the working process.

Other groups, for example Young Entrepreneurship Association, Free Sport Association and Girls Group, where more ‘task-oriented’. Based on what they wanted to achieve with their ARP, they created a temporal work-alliance and organised themselves into project-team with a certain task-division. When working together with the ARP, it also seems like they were able to bracket their usual relationships (for example friendship) for a while, and instead relate to

each other more as ‘colleagues’ with a task to perform. This relational-pattern seems to have been a functional way to organise the internal relations of the ARP team, in order to reach their goals. In addition, for those groups that belonged to a larger organisation or had other everyday main activities (such as Girls Group and Free Sport Association), to form a “special project” on the side, appears to have been a working way to manage the relationships connected to the group’s usual activities.

Problem owners, representatives and beneficiaries

In the process of defining problems, coming up with solutions, and finding applicable approaches, the ARP groups were also faced with defining themselves in relation to other parts involved. For several groups key issues at this stage, were: “for whose sake do we do this?”, and: “who are we in relation to them?”

In some ARPs, for example the Political Youth Association case, this question was quite simple to answer – the board members wanted to address a problem they had themselves (excessive workload), which placed them in the position of ‘problem owners’. Also, in the Islamic Youth Association, The Box and Hidden, can the ARP groups be understood as ‘the problem owners’, but because their ambitions with the project stretched beyond their own group, and though the projects were not only for their own sake, the relational patterns became more complex. These conditions meant that they also needed to define the people they were targeting or wanted to speak on behalf of – and in turn define themselves in relation to them. The Islamic Group Association group solved this by having a very welcoming and inviting approach. In doing this, they acted as ‘hosts’ to what they perceived as a meaningful social context, and they addressed their target group as ‘guests’ and ‘potential members’ of their community. In Box and Hidden, the ARP groups wanted to visualise not only themselves, but also other people who shared the same experiences. This was done by letting their own life story symbolise experiences of shared problematic life-situations, delivered in a way that reminds of ‘I-messages’, way of communicating (see Gordon 1962/2000) In this way, the ARP members became a ‘spokesperson’ or a ‘representative’ in relation to other individuals, who were ‘spoken for’.

In both the Young Entrepreneurship Association- and the Free Sport Association case, the ARP group wanted to plan for a new physical and social space (re-designing a schoolyard and creating a democratic meeting-place). This they considered, would be of benefit and joy for a larger collective to which they themselves belonged. In this way the collective was positioned as ‘beneficiaries’. To get their ideas in line with the will of the others, they needed to discuss their ideas with the rest of the collective, and they did this through a number of meetings. Once they have received the collective’s approval, they were able to act as ‘mandated investigators and designers’ of their respective projects.

The Girls Group case shows yet another form of representation, that shows some resemblance with the ‘drama triangle’ – a perpetrator, a victim and a rescuer (see Karpman 2014). This seems to stem from a conception of the problem they wanted to affect (bullying), as originating from a similar triangle – ‘the bullier’, ‘the bullied’ and the ‘witness of bullying’. The ARP group describes themselves as ‘affected by the problem of bullying’, but rather than as ‘victims’, they position themselves as ‘solidarity witnesses’. Thus, they could not speak on behalf of “their own collective”, at least not in an explicit way, as for example the Young

Entrepreneurship Association- and the Free Sport Association group, could do. Their ambition with the project can instead be understood as a way to improve the situation of young people who are victims of bullying, whom in the project context can be understood as 'beneficiaries'. The change they want to achieve was however more focused on altering the behaviour of the bullies, and on increasing the supportive competence of other witnesses to bullying, and in relation to those counterparties, the group positioned themselves as 'educators'.

Approaching and handling stakeholders

Many of the ARP groups were dependent on other actors than themselves to be able to carry out their projects. Already mentioned, is the context where a 'collective of potential beneficiaries', had to be approached, before the ARP group could act on their mandate. Other external parties, can be various 'stakeholders' (for example politicians, authority officials land-owners or interest groups) who control, for the implementation of the project, important resources.

In the Political Youth Association case, the problem the board members in the ARP group wanted to solve was defined as their own excessive workload. The association members, who were labelled as "passive", by the ARP group, where at this stage regarded as 'potential tools for problem-solving'. However, when interviewing these 'passive members', it turned out that most of them had little or no interest in being a part of this arrangement. Due to the ARP process, the board members received an altered view of what motivated their members to join the association. This in turn led them to reposition themselves – from superordinate 'problem owners' to become a more service-oriented 'information channel', and in line with this, they adopted a series of measures that more matched the wishes of the members of the association.

Both the Free Sport Association- and Young Entrepreneurship Association cases were dependent on external actors' (school principals, municipality officials, politicians) approval and financial support to carry on with their ideas. In both cases, the ARP groups approached them as 'support-seekers' in a negotiation situation and addressed the officials as 'potential support-providers'. In the Young Entrepreneurship Association case, the negotiations led to a consensus and an agreement between the parties. For Free Sport Association, the event developed in a different way – the officials welcomed the association representatives like 'nice and committed youth' worth praising for their good work. However, they never really answered whether they were prepared to provide financial support or not. By acting *as if* their listening to the committed youth was the main goal of the discussion, they managed to "twist the rules of the game", and in this way they "escaped" from giving an answer to the posed question.

In the Box case, the groups did not choose to address politicians or municipality officials with claims for measures that could improve their situation. Instead the stated goal of their ARPs, was on a more value-based level. Hence, their 'counterparty' in the ARP context consisted of a rather undefined public, who was addressed as 'witnesses' to the social iniquities the group members had to encounter in their everyday life, and as 'potential support-givers' to the groups' struggle for improved living-conditions. What this support could consist of, outside of the immediate ARP context, was however not clearly described.

Supporters and mandated facilitators

Just as important as approaching stakeholders, seems to be for the groups to identify and forming working alliances with actors willing to support and assist the group in their work-process.

In some cases, such as Young Entrepreneurship Association, the support from the approached stakeholders, where they repositioned themselves from 'potential support-givers' to actual 'support-givers', seem to have been crucial. A similar re-positioning process occurred when the visitors to the Box exhibition went from 'potential recognition-givers' to 'outside-witnesses' when showing empathy and understanding of the participants' life situation.

Another support function, that in many cases seem to have been crucial for the outcomes of the ARPs, is what here is described as the 'mandated facilitator'. In some ARPs, this function was held by the involved Partispace researcher, and in others in collaboration with a youth- or a NGO-worker, as for example in the Islamic Youth Association, Young Entrepreneurship Association, Girls Group, Box and Hidden. In a similar way as the mandate-process in some of the ARP cases, this facilitator gained mandate through discussions with the ARP groups about what was important to them and what they wanted to do in their ARP. In this process, the group members were addressed as 'owners of their own process', that is, had the right to define the problem, formulate their own goal, as well as the means for reaching it. The role taken by the facilitators was to assist the group in this process. Depending on the group members' own resources and competencies, and where in the work-process they were, the facilitator could offer the needed support.

In some cases, the Partispace researcher seem to have been involved mostly as a facilitator of the reflexion and learning processes of the ARPs. In other cases, the facilitators had a much more active and profound approach, all through the different stages of the working process. For example, in the Young Entrepreneurship Association case, the support seems to have consisted of an addition of knowledge and guidance on how to implement a successful project. In Girls Group, by being available throughout the process and offering practical as well as methodological support, the youth workers at the youth centre seem to have played a significant role for the ARP process. Also, in the Islamic Youth Association, Box and Hidden cases, the facilitators seem to have had a crucial role, both in creating an empathic and safe group atmosphere, and in the creative process when the groups realised their ARP ideas.

6. Learning about participation from action research

Chapters 3 to **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** above focused on learning from and within the process of AR. This chapter explores what can be learned about participation more generally from the story of these projects. Thirteen of the 18 projects emerged out of case studies from the previous work package (the case studies). As such, the current report does not claim that the 18 ARPs are representative of the concerns of young people in general, only those young people and groups that were involved in these projects. The projects are also reflective of choices and decisions made by the research teams, what was feasible within the timescales of a funded project, and which groups of young people were happy to work with us on this basis (see also note above: Adult-led vs. youth-led action research). Nonetheless, the ARPs were varied in terms of the young people involved, and the projects' aims, processes and outcomes, and offer valuable opportunities for learning about participation. This chapter draws together that learning.

The focus of this chapter is less about what the issues and priorities are for young people and instead is oriented towards a reflective analysis and deeper investigation into *how* young people participate in different contexts. The concern is therefore with the 'processes' and 'dynamics' of participation in these ARPs and what can be learned from that about why and how these different practices of participation are meaningful for young people. The significance of this 'cross-cutting' learning is that it has emerged from young people's own inquiries and action, to a large extent according to their own reflection, interpretation and sense making.

The task of understanding processes and dynamics of participation is however complicated by different types of participation. For example, the motivation, significance and purpose of young people 'participating' in some kind of youth subcultural activity may involve different dynamics to the activities of a group mobilising for explicit purposes of bringing about change. These different 'traditions' in interpreting participation are relevant to all of this report and whilst on one level they constitute quite different emphases, there is in both a common thread of inclusion and active citizenship. All the same, some features of young people's participation that can be drawn out are significant to different extents for different young people in different contexts.

Section 6.1 unterhalb draws out some key themes concerning preferences and styles of participation in terms of the values and characteristics that are important for young people when they participate. Section 6.2 then reflects on learning in terms of contributions to theory and praxis of participation. The final section outlines implications for policy and practice.

6.1. Participation a la mode: preferences and styles

The diversity of different types of participation that emerged from the AR bears testament to the orientations and potentiality of 'alternative' approaches to participation beyond formalised mainstream structures. AR is concerned with better understanding the praxis of participation from young people's standpoint, and the ARPs above have explored in particular, participation processes or 'styles' of participation. One project team reflected:

Styles of youth participation can be regarded as specific combination of youth groups' own initially developed styles and the modifications they necessarily adopt from interactions with institutions, public support or alienation, and the financial reality which the participants face. Thus, the style is chiefly a process and not so much an instant picture of predetermined practices and attitudes, and moreover, it varies according to the concrete acts of participation.' (Researcher reflections, ARRZ, p29)

Some of what follows in terms of learning from the AR may also have emerged in the case studies. This in is unsurprising. However, where there is clear synergy, this report does not go into great detail unless it provides further insight or significance.

Relevance, immediacy and the importance of context

Many young people feel strongly about a range of societal issues such as social justice, fairness, caring for people and democracy, yet are more likely to mobilise around issues that are close to their everyday spaces and styles of activity and concern. Most of the projects - and the issues at the core of the ARP - had a relevance to the young people's own lives, either directly for those concerned or because of what they see around them and close to them. This relevance and the immediacy of experiences has a significant bearing on how young people participate. This is especially the case with projects that relate to young people's own life struggles, whether seeking legal status and entitlements as a newly arrived immigrant or asking how a piece of land is used in their neighbourhood. In this sense participation becomes a lived social practice – *participation for real* – rather than a performance in a context abstracted from their everyday lives. Having a 'cause' is a significant motivator for young people's participation but tends only to develop into a possibility for participation if there is an opportunity or vehicle to pursue such a cause. For many of the young people in the AR, there was a clear 'project-based' preference for participation, illustrated below by researcher reflections in one country report:

Young people get motivated for activities for the public good when they are faced with a clearly defined challenge, that concerns their own lives before they move on to wider public goals. (ARRP, p23)

When they faced a problem whose solution could immediately serve to their needs they were more inclined to mobilize than in cases of 'much broader civil society topics'. The group shared the opinion that youth involvement could become a sustainable behavior when ensuring a sense of usefulness among the young people. This sense, on its turn, could only be successfully developed through gradual participation in various small-scale projects. (ARRP, p17)

As a result of their focus on everyday relevance, participation settings shift out of formalised institutions to the more public space of city squares and neighbourhoods.

Sociality of participation

Although participation has tended to take on a 'political' characteristic involving decision-making and change processes, all of the ARPS share a sense of sociality when young people participate together. Whereas some groups form with clear social intent to hang out and chill

with friends, others, perhaps those who are more overtly change-focused, retain a fundamental social dimension in the ways in which they organise and commune.

[The] group is critical about the current social and political atmosphere of Turkey. We can also say that it is a circle of friends, who regularly meet to spend time together, including sharing their common concerns as well as having fun. [...] However, they also occasionally engage in planning activities in order to 'make a difference'. (Researcher reflections, ARRE, p2)

What is significant here is that whilst some activities might develop a more political intent, this is not the case with all groups. A preoccupation for some of the groups encountered in the AR was the search for a 'space' where they can meet and develop a sense of ownership of the space. In such cases, 'social participation' becomes political as they fight to secure an appropriate space.

Autonomy and self-determination

Discourses of participation often focus on involvement in relation to wider social (normally mainstream) processes in response to specific issues. The ARPs showed, however, that young people value self-determination and autonomy when they participate. In many ways, this desire amongst many of the groups to have control and ownership of what they do is a result of a widespread distrust of politicians and institutions and a negative view of conventional politics. Whilst this also emerged from the case studies, it is important to reemphasise here.

Young people articulate a clear desire for doing things for themselves and being active, rather than being 'done to', and for having the space and autonomy to experiment, learn experientially and be creative. Young people noted:

*I like how we have the freedom, we don't get controlled by it.
One of the main differences with the youth council is that it can sometimes be a bit tokenistic like we will have something on the agenda then someone from higher up will come and put something else on the agenda.
We just want the chance of being independent. I think we've had that experience and now we can reflect back. (ARRM, p31)
It's important to have independence – is a learning curve. (ARRM, p33)*

Having the space for autonomy and self-determination is important in terms of having the power to decide not only how they engage but also what they engage in. A researcher reflected: 'Young people can achieve serious results given the opportunity.' (ARRP, p24) Personal agency and empowerment are therefore facilitated through young people having autonomy and participating through self-determination. Shifting the context to everyday spaces helps enable autonomous participation wherein young people can do things in their own way.

In some cases, the desire for more control, autonomy and self-determination was manifest in a desire for 'leadership' in projects. Yet, as with other incidences of leadership in wider society, this does not preclude the role of support from others. In a number of projects, for example, the creative input and resources from an adult professional supported young people.

There is a paradox here in that participation is often discussed in relation to inclusion and being part of wider society, yet one assumption might be that autonomy and self-determination means leaving young people to themselves. The projects in the AR on the contrary demonstrate that this is often not what young people want. Indeed, as will be discussed below, adult/professional others have a significant role to play (e.g. providing resources and support and as critical friends) even when young people want to exercise control over their work. For example, Manchester Young Researchers valued the freedom from control by other agendas and being able to do their own project, and were essentially self-motivated. At the same time, they were open about seeking support and input from adults as and when they felt they needed it.

Recognition and awareness: communicating lived experience

Raising public awareness and communicating the realities of situations, through voice, were central in most of the projects, highlighting the importance of participation as [social] learning and a way to bring about change. In this way, in spite of some discourses of participation seeking to move beyond simplistic notions of ‘voice’, through an emphasis on communicating realities and raising awareness, the significance of ‘voice’ is reasserted in these projects, albeit in a different way. It might perhaps better understood as ‘self-expression’.

Many of the young people in the ARPs communicated who they are rather than necessarily seeking to influence decision-making. For many young people, there is a priority need when they participate, to express themselves for example through music, through lifestyle choices or through actions such as taking care of relatives. In its most fundamental sense, this is a manifestation of participation as a struggle for recognition, a desire to communicate lived realities and values, and to be recognised and valued. It is not necessarily about representing different interests or perspectives but, rather, participating in terms of young people as active citizens, contributing to the social fabric of the city through their behaviours and actions. Here, it is relevant to connect with those projects that were first and foremost about youth sub cultural styles. For these young people, participation is not about change processes but about expressions of their values in the form of sub cultural styles, manifest in appropriation and use of particular spaces and places. For these young people, activity happens in the hidden liminal spaces of society, often because of activities perceived as a polluting presence on the landscape, upsetting the moral order of the street. In these situations, young people have sought ‘private’ spaces in public places where they can perform without repercussion or admonishment, places of safety and belonging. These spaces are what Ed Soja (1996) referred to as ‘third space’ between public and private worlds, lived spaces of cultural identity construction.

There is however further paradox at play here, for as young people seek out ‘worlds apart’ from wider society to be themselves, there is a simultaneous desire for recognition and acceptance for what and who they are. Recognition and awareness of difference is therefore in tension with ambivalence of conformity.

Exploring these experiences through alternative (artistic and cultural) forms of communication and expression, rather than more formalised bureaucratic processes, seemed to allow more scope for the participants to express themselves in ways that are closer to their lived experience and that had more meaning for the young people. For example, graffiti groups offer a platform for self-expression, a symbol of belonging, and a language for telling their story. In other cases,

young people may use other artistic forms such as music, art, performance and social activities as alternative modes of participation to communicate and address separatist tendencies by building 'neighbourhood solidarity' and provide the tools to fight on and to fight back as part of the struggle against a system that is experienced as unjust and oppressive.

Significance of space

The significance of space emerged in other ways in the AR. On the one hand, space is important for young people simply having somewhere to meet. In some projects, space had a more profound significance as it became part of the identity of the group. In this sense, youth participation can appear to happen in a bubble – bounded spaces to maintain the group whilst at the same time drawing a boundary with wider society. But spaces also provide opportunities to claim ownership and visibility.

However, on another level, the significance of different sorts of spaces for young people in terms of the affordances they offer for different types of participation, is important. Different qualities of space require and give way to different learning processes. Significantly, informal spaces emerged as being important for young people as sites where young people can express themselves freely, can relax and discuss serious issues as well as having fun. These are in marked contrast to more formalised spaces such as school where participation opportunities are experienced as being limited and restricted.

The most important thing, isn't just the number of participants... perhaps the most important thing is, actually, trying to build a group, with a pleasant atmosphere. To build that kind of environment a person wants to go to, in order to express him/herself, and also show her/him comfort/discomfort in staying there. So, more than the number of participant – that is actually an issue – we firstly have to build the group, namely a real community, because to be active, to participate, doesn't mean just to come here and say your idea, but it also means to free ourselves from stereotypes, to take a stand, all those things we wrote [on the post it], to feel included, from coming into a place that seems boring at first glance, but then let you to discover the wonder, the amazement of staying together, that is, often, taken for granted. Young person, ARRB, p16)

Spaces are not static but continually shaped by young people as they reflexively engage with the significance of the space(s) they inhabit as part of their meaning-making concerning their own position, and therefore participation, as citizens.

Activation and entrepreneurship

In many of the projects, there was a focus on 'activation' of young people to become engaged, in political parties, in community youth associations, in decision-making, in finding solutions to social problems etc. An underlying feature for many of the projects is a 'no risk no gain logic' focusing attention on action and 'doing stuff'. Some cases emphasise particular 'styles' or 'praxis' of engagement that developed through the ARPs. The idea of 'entrepreneurship' emerged in some of the projects, not as a business-focused profit-making venture but in terms of social entrepreneurship reflected in a commitment to promoting community democracy,

openness, collaboration and a plurality of activities and perspectives, and using creative forms as an alternative to bureaucracy and mainstream politics. These alternative approaches open up new principles for distributing power and resources in society whilst broadening concepts of community inclusion and engagement. For example, one project mobilised the notion of entrepreneurship as an approach to active citizenship for involving young people in decision making processes, through finding market solutions to social and civic problems. This involved teaching young people to develop projects and assess their economic effects. These principles are elaborated through opportunities for young people to be engaged in the real time of projects demonstrating the importance of ensuring young people have access to spaces for creative problem-solving. Bringing together the principles of ‘entrepreneurship’ with relevant issues and concerns for young people, one of the project teams develop a useful framework for participation in terms of: ‘**concern**’ (to take care of something, to be interested in it and think it important); ‘**demands**’ (in terms of moving things forward) and ‘**initiative**’ (to provoke it to happen with personal effort).

Motivation and commitment

An exploration of young people’s participation reveals that some of the young people may have experienced a ‘mismatch’ between their commitment to ideas and their commitment to action (in terms of time, motivation and so on). Young people appear to be an endless source of ideas and inspiration, yet for some groups, converting this into action and sustaining commitment became more problematic, resulting at best falling short of project aims, and at worse, complete withdrawal.

On the one hand the division of labour was not clear: who was in charge, who will take which charge for what. On the other, even if they were motivated by the project at first, it seems that there were no clear incentive mechanisms to push them to act. (Research reflection, ARRE, p7)

In contrast, for other projects where the motivation to participate was rooted in their own personal struggles, commitment was less of a problem.

[W]ith a common objective/ purpose to which all the participants contribute to develop and consent, explicit incentives but also proper tools (capacity and resources), young people are more inclined to participate. (Researcher reflection, ARRE, p8)

It is clear that motivation to participate is higher when there is an intrinsic drive from young people themselves in the projects they initiate. In contrast, when the driver is external to the young people, commitment to the project is more uncertain and dependent on whether young people share the vision and agenda. In turn, through their projects and initiatives, young people often need to draw on the expertise and input from others. In one case, young people felt left down by professionals who were supposed to feed back comments on a handbook they produced.

Whereas maintaining commitment was an issue in some projects, in others, initial fears of a lack of interest turned out to be unfounded, particularly when young people had the opportunity

of doing something for themselves as a group there was enthusiasm for engagement. A key characteristic of AR (as it is in the Partispace project) is to challenge assumptions. Similarly, assumptions about what young people can and cannot, will and will not, do can be contested through project work.

*[W]e had often underestimated the young people and their feeling of commitment and duty-fulfilling, in a sense that during the whole process we weren't sure if they would make it to the complete ARP product or withdraw.
(Researcher reflection, ARRF, p17)*

Through undertaking projects, it becomes possible to see some of the systemic issues at play that can affect young people's participation. One of these sets of issues concerns having a context in which young people can 'successfully' participate without barriers. As one researcher noted: 'It is impressive what young people can do, if they have the necessary financial resources.' (ARRF, p26-27). Yet most participation does not happen in idealised contexts. Indeed, for others, the motivation was about finding solutions to unforeseen problems as they emerged and feeling 'empowered' in having done so.

Leadership and group dynamics

A key element to participation concerns the way in which groups function, how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities within the group, and whether and how leadership is manifest. Many of the critiques within participation discourses concern the problems of inter-generational hierarchies and power imbalances between professionals and young people. In the projects in the AR, a recurring theme was how young people organise and function as a group.

In order to be able to achieve the ARP members' goals with their project, what is referred to above as the 'side project' or 'a temporal work alliance of collegiality' seems to be a well-functioning way for the members to organise themselves. On the other hand, for the group members to be able to form themselves in any way they like, seems to be a potential way to learn more about what kind of working relationships they prefer for different purposes.

Many groups were characterised by a grassroots democratic orientation based on consensus and free of hierarchy. There does appear to be a commitment among young people to share, respect each other's contributions and engage in collective processes. Horizontal power relations in reality were difficult to sustain; instead, in many of the projects, different individuals emerged naturally as leaders and acted in ways that often mirrored adult leadership of young people's groups. This sometimes occurred when there was a need to encourage the group to keep momentum or to organise the group, especially when different members moved in and out of the group. In this respect, in a number of projects, the initiative clearly rested with one person. Ascribed and claimed leadership roles sometimes emerged out of struggles within the group as individuals searched for identity, roles and value (recognition). Individual young people's commitment to a particular task can earn them a role in the group. In some cases, leadership may change over time according to the tasks at hand; in other cases there may be a consistent leader. However, in a number of projects once one young person stepped forward, this led to them becoming the initiator of all subsequent activities. Explicitly defined roles and incentives seem important for young people to participate in some cases, whether given by

themselves or by professional facilitators. In one project, one of the young men took what appeared to be a parodic stance of pretend leadership, possibly an expression of his own experience of not feeling he necessarily has the control over his own life as he might. However, it was clear that not all young people wanted to take on leadership and responsibility; instead different young people take on different roles in the group, which may be simply being part of the group without having particular responsibilities.

For the most part the way young people worked together was reflective of a commitment to fairness and inclusion according to democratic philosophy. This was characterised by young people ‘puzzling together’ utilising the ideas and problem solving potential of the group. One country partner noted that:

Relationships were characterised by a climate of trust and conviviality, but roles and decision spaces were organised by skills and responsibilities. (Researcher reflection, ARRR, p11)

Whilst some groups were task focused, others were more concerned with the dynamics and interaction of the group. Participation for one group was summarised as meaning ‘to take responsibility, to show willingness to work voluntary and collectively as a part of a shared idea in a complex way of acting’ (ARRF, p29).

The PCCs work and AR brochure but also the reflection round has been a lot about the degree and enthusiasm of individual involvement, group dynamics, the goal of group cohesion and personal development and identity work – sometimes in a conflict, sometimes in harmony. (ARRF, p19)

A common characteristic across many groups was the importance of having fun even when dealing with important issues. One of the project participants in Italy reflected:

[W]e dealt with serious issue, but, when you usually deal with serious issues you stay sit, you are serious, you talk one at a time. Sometimes it could get boring. Here we did it in a very funny way, differently from what we usually do [...]. We created the lanterns, with a story on each face [...] We felt more intimate. (Young person’s reflection, ARRB, p21)

For the most part, projects were self-directing. In contrast to many expectations across the project consortium, many young people identified the importance of having a researcher or other professional to provide support, encouragement and at time suggestions and ideas. One of the key issues that pervaded the Partispace project has been whether, when and how researchers/ professionals should intervene or not (see also section above: Working together and making projects ‘work’).

6.2. Reflections on contributions to theory and praxis of participation

One of the most striking outcomes from the ARPs was the realisation that participation is as much a process as it is a way of achieving tangible outcomes in terms of change. In some cases, the projects did not achieve their project goals completely within the Partispace project

timescales, but did achieve learning from their experience. Indeed, the objectives of these projects were not about changing the world, but about learning and experience; specifically, the importance of informal, non-specified, non-quantified, non-predefined learning. This subsection considers key contributions to understanding participation as a learning process and as personal development. Then, the subsection explores how young people learn in action as they reflexively negotiate boundaries and competing positions, before the section with some reflections on the role of adult/professionals.

Participation as a journey of self-learning

A substantial part of the learning that occurs when young people participate is not about how to achieve something, but about pursuing hopes and dreams and learning from the journey. Young people's participation is essentially a personal learning journey, a search for meaning and belonging, for power and self-determination and for making sense of who they are in the world. Arguably, the social phenomena of young people's groups and actions are matched in importance with the underlying psycho-social realities that bring young people to participate in, and contribute to, the groups they are in.

We found that very often young people's participation is about everyday activities of self-discovery, identity formation rather than reaching concrete results which is contrary to the expectations and bureaucratic requirements of administrative bodies of policy making. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p26)

This journey of self-discovery is about young people seeking to give meaning and purpose to their lives. This involves being a part of something (sense of family and community), creating an ideal space within the micro spaces of society. As one project observed:

The PCC's activists are looking for matching between themselves and the group. Concerned with finding an answer, they are asking questions like 'Who am I?', 'How much am I able to give, what am I able to do?' or 'What did I do?'. The high amounts of biographical story-telling in the brochure (and the other documents) arise from this kind of questions which often have been the topic in plenary sessions. The brochure shows negotiating and reasoning about biography, motivations, resources, claims of the space and personal engagement. The amount of necessities and claims of maintaining the PCC is subject of discussion from a personal rather than political view. (Researcher reflection, ARRF, p18-19)

Groups provide safe space for young people to be themselves whilst also understanding what this means in relation to the group and wider society. These creative tensions can give rise to inner and social conflicts that are at play when young people participate and manifest through experiences of inclusion and exclusion. For example, in the context of young migrants, participation becomes an inner and outer journey of cultural reconciliation with respect to conflicts surrounding social identity as well as an intergenerational learning process as young people seek to mediate between the need for cultural reanimation for social integration and on the other hand respect for parental culture and tradition. In these situations, where young people

have to negotiate a hybrid identity, participation becomes a sort of coping strategy. In such situations, the group offers a resource on which to draw positive support, though for example debating these issues with others facing similar experiences.

Because for us (Muslims) living here in Italy – Italians have a completely different culture from ours' – it's a pleasure to meet with people who share the same culture... so there is a gap, they actually are two different worlds, and it's nice to meet among us, it's like feeling home. (Young person, ARRB, p24)

As one of the researchers reflected:

[O]ne of the element[s] that emerges from our work with IYA is that participation in the association is experienced as a personal journey. Participation in this case is meant to be a process of personal enrichment, a process of training and growing up, an individual fulfillment, planned, acted and achieved together with peers. The objective of participation, thus, is to improve one-self, to promote «fair values», to find a «balance» as an individual. More than in other participatory experiences, therefore, the IYA represents a context where weaknesses are accepted, and no-one feels judged to demonstrate his/her limits and insecurities. The very purpose of participation in IYA is to work to overcome those weaknesses, thanks to the help of the Islamic faith. (ARRB, p22)

There is a further dimension to personal fulfillment in participation reflected in the extent to which young people may 'participate' only in so far as it yields benefits for them (though this may not be exclusively a 'youth' trait). In one of the ARPs, the young people graduated from school and left the process. So one may ask if for them participation was just a phase (again, this may not be exclusively a 'youth' trait). In other projects, whilst on the surface there was an evident benevolent commitment to participation initiatives and making a difference, at the same time some young people were clearly simultaneously motivated to use their participation experiences to build their CV and, in other cases, to derive other forms of personal material or careerist gain. The link between moving between different types of participation and stages of their life and career trajectories is an issue in need of further research.

However, the issue of progression was much less clear in some cases. For example, in one of the projects using art to communicate experiences of homelessness, the idea of progression for the young adults was an intended 'outcome' of participating in the project. However, they themselves expressed uncertainty about what it was that they were expected to 'progress to'. Hence, whilst there may be some transitory benefit from involvement, participation is not necessarily *able* to bring about progression in some circumstances.

A researcher noted:

The young people illustrated and themselves reflected upon a form of emancipation from the exploration of their lived experiences (realities) through the action research. They seemed to learn about their lives and,

crucially, their positionality, through carrying out the project, and found ways to communicate this with 'another'. This was empowering on one level but it also served to remind them and others of the precarity and vulnerability of their life circumstances. (ARRM, p35)

The projects were, therefore and at times, emotional. (ARRM, p35)

Participation as a learning process

Participation is often understood in terms of expressions of values or actions to produce outcomes. What emerged as significant in the projects was the centrality of learning in young people's experiences. This took a number of forms.

Learning by doing – Young people demonstrated an orientation towards doing rather than just talking by embarking on a project without necessarily knowing where it was going, only that there was an issue or problem to address. This involves learning as they go, exploring the issues, coming up with plans, perhaps trying them out, revisiting plans, revisiting the problem, creating new plans, taking action, encountering difficulties and finding ways to resolve these, as the following extract of a group at work illustrates:

The students established that though the school was state owned and subjected to the Ministry of Education, the land on which it was built and which included the schoolyard was public municipal property so any action directed at renovation should involve two more stakeholders: the principal of the school and the Plovdiv Municipal Council. The next stage of the process supposed another wider meeting with school students (this time, 7 in number) designed to determine what ideas for renovation could be gathered and which of them would really make young people interested and ready to join the whole activity. [...] Establishing a skate park on the spot emerged as the most debated idea during the brainstorming session. While some of the participants argued that it would be unique for the schools in the city, especially against the backdrop of lacking so many such places at all in the city, and thus would attract serious attention, others warned about supposed too high costs of the whole enterprise. [...] A more consensual idea was creating a park area which would not cost so much because plenty of the work (cleaning, planting trees and flowers, etc.) could be done by the students themselves and besides it could be combined with different additions. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p11)

In the end, a recreational park with various facilities dependent on the opportunities and the funding set up as the plan to be followed since. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p12)

All these processes involve some kind of learning within groups and with others. Taken together, participation encompasses all of these elements to different degrees at different times.

that participation is a process and is about learning, a learning experience, finding out the best thing to do as we do it, about the challenges and not meeting deadlines and how that affects things, keep on learning (ever

learning) and solving problems as they come up. (Young person, Manchester Manchester Young Researchers self-documentation, p3)

There is therefore a fluidity to young people's participation characterised as an exploratory and experimental process. In this respect, young people are constantly in a dynamic process of situated social learning (in the sense of reflection on experience) and action. Learning and action are therefore intertwined. For example, one ARP set out to offer health, rights and language workshops to refugees, in order to help refugees to settle into the city and to understand their rights and to increase refugees' inclusion in the city. The leader of the project said:

First, we wanted to conduct such a project because large number of refugees live in [redacted] where the initiative is located; they have their own workplaces and we have had regular interactions with those refugees working in cafés, restaurants etc. in the neighborhood. We wished to build a 'neighborhood solidarity' in a sense specific to Eskişehir, to [redacted] neighborhood (where the initiative is located) in a micro scale; to create such an atmosphere where refugees coming to a foreign country to escape war and political oppressions of their own countries improve their communication with local residents and tradesmen; to decrease local residents' hate speech; to strengthen the ties of refugees with the city. (Young person, ARRE, p3)

However, this group experienced problems in accessing refugees with whom to work and particularly in terms of gaining trust and sharing languages. To address these issues, the project organised street food events, music concerts, as well as the workshops, to meet with refugees, to help them to develop a language competence in order to shop and use amenities in the city, and to help them to integrate with and participate in the life of the city.

For some projects, then, learning was a more intentional process of inquiry as young people seek a better understanding of priority concerns.

Participation as communicative action - One of the most powerful examples of learning is through dialogue – sharing and reflecting on personal experiences as a group. For example, the youth association in Italy used a lantern activity and 'narrative circle' to share experiences of being both Muslim and Italian to construct a stronger sense of the role of the group in their life. As one participant reflected:

I don't know, maybe now I'm feeling I know a little better the people I meet every Saturday, people who before... since they 'let us enter' in a private sphere of their life, who, maybe, wouldn't have normally told us, you feel more like in a family, isn't it? Then, a moment of trust occurred... I mean, you need to trust to tell a part of yourself as we did... Maybe in another place I probably wouldn't have told what I told. I felt comfortable at that time. Actually I said [during the activity] I feel comfortable at the [Islamic Youth Association]. And that activity helped a lot. (Young person, ARRB, p9)

This excerpt highlights the value of having 'safe and comfortable' spaces to share and explore together and a preference for creative media. It also exemplifies the power of learning in what Kemmis (2001) drawing on Habermas refers to as 'communicative action spaces' that provide opportunities for participatory social learning for group members. Learning thus happens between individuals and groups as well as from interaction with, and in relation to, wider society.

Participation as reflexive learning - Learning in participation informs ways of understanding and responding to particular issues or problems. It also provides a dynamic arena in which the meaning of the group is continually evolved through learning and action. That is, that the young people navigated their own experiences, developed and articulated their own understandings of their situation, and explored together what that means in terms of their lives and their own changing sense of self. In turn, learning from interaction within groups provides a constantly changing learning opportunities for individuals to explore their own sense of identity and belonging with respect to the group. Learning, and therefore participation, is thus simultaneously individual and collective.

Participation also involves 'ideological learning' – developed during the working process of the project wherein ideas and activities are subjected to ideological questioning and based on values and principles they feel are important. For example, principles of parkour that characterised one project group are mirrored by ideas about social awareness, democracy and so on. Ideological framings such as these emerge out of the experience of struggling against restrictions and constructing visions based on hopes, dreams and desires that provide a basis for place, identity and action. Ideological framings may be enacted, challenged and reconstructed and thus become part of the learning process and outcome of project activities as well as providing a guide for future activities. This type of learning outcome can be conceptualised as a form of what Freire (1971) referred to as 'conscientization' arising out of sense making and learning from complexities at play when young people seek to participate.

In general, young people participated together based on principles of being **democratic** and **equitable**. In this respect, the way in which participatory processes happen is centrally importance for young people and reflected in concerns about inclusion, commitment, fairness and horizontal decision making.

Realising their own abilities - Taking responsibility for their own participation ARPs can throw up issues cornering their own abilities in two ways. First, through engaging in action, young people come to realise the reality and complexities concerning participation and what change projects involve. Second, through participatory action, they have an opportunity to realise their own abilities in the real time of practice. This may involve becoming aware that there are limits to their own agency, but equally, that they can do more than they think they can do. This may for example, involve realising that they can use their own power and creativity in responding to problems.

Young people may well welcome the different opportunities for participation outside of formal structures and may express some frustrations about restrictions in these settings. However, when they engage in more informal and autonomous processes they readily draw on the skills and knowledge they have accrued as a result of experiences in formal settings. Whilst these

experiences may not always provide the full spectrum of opportunities for young people, they do nonetheless offer important contexts for what Lave and Wenger (1991) call opportunities for ‘Legitimate peripheral participation.’ To that extent the experience gained from involvement in various small scale projects can provide an important learning ground.

Instead of the political idea of a ‘big plan’ and grand ideas, to revolutionise the whole society by one big movement, it is more about micro-politics and projects. The claim to change the society finds its place in small interactions and project, just like a mosaic. So there is not ‘the political program’ of the PCC but it is about learning, interacting, experimenting, self-realisation in small projects. (Researcher reflection, ARRF, p18))

A recurrent theme was the extent to which young people in some cases constructed ‘grand ideas’ only to have those revised when seeking to put their plans into practice. Part of the learning process for young people involves bridging the gap between their visions and ideas and what is realistic and achievable in practice.

[The young people] preferred to deal with a greater all-encompassing problem - how to overcome the political apathy of young people in Plovdiv. This was an issue concerning their activity as a section of a political party and was often discussed at their meetings. We tried to direct them toward a more concrete research problem which would be more manageable for the time resources that we had for example the lack of interest of young people to take part in voting. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p7)

By working through the AR process, the group reframed their central question: ‘Is it possible to turn efforts combatting political apathy into a genuinely mobilizing cause of more and more young people? (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p19)

This realisation reflects the learning that there is a complexity at play in change projects that involve the need to engage different stakeholders, and that such projects take time, as a result of for example dealing with administrative processes. For example, in the case above, the project leads reflected on the extent to which implementation of project plans depends on the ‘eagerness and will for inclusion of a whole community’ (Young person, ARRP, p16).

Through these different forms of experiential learning, young people exercise and derive a sense of empowerment from practice. As one of the researchers reflected:

[T]he practical conviction of possibility of change through one’s own efforts is among the best outcomes of AR projects. Thus, the young may move from the phase of being only critical of politics and ready to leave the country to the organized group attempts at changing the way politics is done in the country and in the city. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p24)

Creativity and emergence - Characteristically there is no pre-defined method to the ways young people participate; instead, there is an element of pragmatism, spontaneity and emergence in the way they develop their projects. These projects were not planned with a blueprint methodology to follow. In this sense the way young people participate is a journey without a

'satnav' to guide; instead decisions and actions happen in context, emerging organically out of everyday conversations, situations and engagement. There is, therefore, an inherent flexibility and creativity in the process as young people appear often happy to start a process without necessarily having a plan but happy to work with uncertainty.

[Young people] demonstrate rich imagination in establishing various activities and connect[ing] them in a coherent way. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p25)

Some young people show a preference for artistic and cultural forms (as was also evident in the case studies). Novelty, imagination, creativity and ingenuity are considered essential for many of these projects, creating new modes and ways of participating. As a result, one of the characteristics of young people's modes of participation is a coming together of arts, culture and politics.

Participation as the reflexive negotiation of boundaries

Understanding participation as a process rather than a fixed mode or status helps achieve a better understanding of the complexity at play as young people reflexively negotiate between their own individual position in relation to the wider context they find themselves. For young people in these projects participation is therefore not a simple process of articulation of fixed views and actions, but characterised by action oriented learning as they seek to position themselves between what appear as contradictory forces. Examples in these projects include:

Individual and collective meaning

Insider and outsider positions

Difference and acceptance

Self-determination and support

Informal and formal processes

Lifeworlds and systems

Freedom and structure

These are essentially the arenas of participation – contexts for learning and change – dynamic interaction within and between groups. The way in which young people reconcile these boundaries depend on the participatory practices and choices they make that question, accept, transgress and /or confirm boundaries of groups, spaces, situations and identities.

Changes within group dynamics [are] learning processes [in] participation in different modes such as balancing, struggling, negotiating with society and within the group, working on boundaries and taking risks. (Researcher reflection, ARRF, p26)

At same time, those that started more informal projects often experience the inevitability of engagement in more formal ways as they seek to bridge connections with local decision-making hierarchies (including city councils) in order to progress their own informal agenda. There is no ideal context for participation that can be provided; instead, the significance of

these findings is to acknowledge and reinforce that participation is a process, constantly in flux, but given meaning by those involved. In this respect, participation cannot be reduced to a formulaic process offered by formal structures but provided space for within the flows and spaces of everyday life.

Reflections on adult/ professional/ researcher roles

Often, in processes that masquerade as being participative, hierarchies prevail with the researcher or professional setting the agenda. The ARPs set out to create a different context in which young people could exercise power in determining their own projects and learning together with researchers in response to these projects.

The challenge [...] was to change the nature of the communication – their role becoming more active and involved, influencing the research process and our role moving more to the background and breaking with the pose of ‘noninterference’ and ‘objectivity’. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p9)

This posed a challenge for the Partispace researchers in questioning their own position with some seeing this as shifting from a research role to a youth worker role when young people participate. These conflicts were reflected in comments and reflections from researchers during the projects concerning when and how to intervene in the ARPs. This ambivalence emerges in different ways in the different projects, but appeared to affect all participants, regardless of age (some of the young people were in their teens and others were young adults). In some of the projects, there were signs that younger researchers were able to engage with young people more effectively than their ‘older’ colleagues. Yet in other projects, effective relationships between older researchers and young people appeared unproblematic, suggesting that age differences may not be a critical factor for effective adult/ professional-youth relationships. The ambivalence about whether and how adult/ researchers might intervene is in turn reflected in a logistical and pragmatic issue in situations where adults see a value in inputting for example when young people develop plans that appear to be fraught with difficulties or seem destined to do little more than recreate or reproduce what already exists. The young people in one project, for example, felt frustrated because they did not receive the feedback that they needed from professionals on the handbook that they produced for youth workers. In writing and amending the handbook without feedback, they risked reproducing work that already existed.

There are two sets of issues here. The first concerns the debate about whether and when adults should intervene and the second concerns how they should intervene? In response to the first issue, whilst young people do clearly want more freedom to pursue their own ideas and have more control and influence on their work, this does not always mean they want to be just left on their own. On the contrary, the learning from these projects indicates clearly that young people very definitely seek the support from adults/ researchers and professionals and value the interaction with adults in collaborative processes. This does not mean that they want adults to come in and direct or control but instead to engage more reflexively in response to young people’s agenda. This invites a rethinking of professional practice in relation to young people’s participation (see also Fitzgerald et al. 2010; Percy-Smith and Weil 2003; Mannion 2007) as

occurred in some of the projects as staff began to rethink their own practice in terms of what it means to support, enhance and facilitate young people's participation.

When, and in what circumstances, adult/ professionals might intervene varies according to context. Central to rethinking adult/professional roles and relationships with young people is a consideration of the different motivations adults might have for encouraging youth participation. Providing opportunities for youth participation for the purposes of citizenship education may constitute one driver. As much of this report highlights, learning is central to participation for young people. Learning for participation is not therefore necessarily a pedagogical practice but more of a mutual process from which adults/ professionals can also benefit. Adult motivations to encourage youth participation similarly may be driven by a commitment to advocate and support the right of young people to self-determination and democratic participation as equal and active citizens. The involvement of adults/ professionals when young people participate should therefore not be seen as something that should be either encouraged or discouraged as a general rule, but instead negotiated in particular acts of participation by those involved.

Power is never a given, but is always negotiable. In this respect, as Fitzgerald et al (2010) and Fielding (2007) and Percy-Smith (2006) argue, participation is about the negotiation of inter-subjectivities in situated social contexts as critically reflexive practice (Percy-Smith and Weil 2003). This conceptualisation speaks once again to the idea of participation as a learning process that has emerged from this project. What this means in reality (as well as being resonant with the philosophy of AR) is that adult researchers, as part of the process, are free to offer perspectives, but young people are equally free to reflect on and reject or take on board those suggestions as they feel appropriate; better still, adults and young people are able to participate in some form of collaborative action inquiry. In this way, reflection and learning is a central part of participatory practice, not just as a result of action.

Despite prevailing assumptions before these projects that adults should not interfere with young people's projects, the importance of cooperation with appropriate professionals emerged significantly from these projects.

The young people in the two groups and the adult researchers acted together as co-researchers and in the process, we both experienced changes in our attitudes and expectations as well [and] brought about changes in the other youth whom we met in the course of the [ARPs]. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p27)

In some cases, young people seemed to value the opportunity to be self-directed but at various stages also questioned whether they needed adults to input. Learning from these projects reveals that adult researchers or professionals can play an important role in young people's participation. Some of the different forms of adult/professional involvement from these projects included:

- Generic support including encouraging and motivating, providing reassurance, helping find focus

- Enabling and providing ideas, being a critical friend, challenging assumptions, posing alternative scenarios to consider, experience, inviting reflection, stimulate opinions, listen and summarize, mediating to enable young people to become independent decision makers and responsibly assess what is feasible or not.
- Helping resolve difficulties, mediating and managing boundaries
- Providing logistic support, brokering links, providing resources

The experience of young people in these projects reveals that young people do not always see adult/professional roles as oppressive and controlling, but instead often look for contributions from adults through different forms of collaborative relationships. Four different stances of collaborative involvement of adults with young people participation emerged in the work

- *Invited input* – where young people invite contributions and input from adults/professionals:

[W]hat you [researchers] can actually leave to us – and I think I am speaking on behalf of all – is a way for succeeding in involving people more during our meetings, because people are often bored, loose easily their attention... and you, for instance, being sociologist... If you had some suggestions to improve our meetings it would be a great contribution. (Young person, ARRB, p16)

[Young people] asked for our support and our expertise at each of the steps [of the process]. (Researcher reflection, ARRR, p5)

- *Provided input* – where adult/professionals working with young people make a contribution based on observing a perceived need for input, but with no influence on whether and how their input is used:

[The young people] rarely sought our advice but they accepted most of our suggestions. They are more publicly recognized and used to work with adults in a more power-sharing relation. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p25)

- *Co-inquiry based practice* – where adult/professionals and young people work together on joint endeavours involving mutual learning:

Even though there was a question of hierarchy and power in the ARP it always seemed like both sides respected the wishes and needs of the other but also had a position on what is possible or not. (Researcher reflection, ARRF, p17)

The fact that some of our suggestions were easily dismissed by the young participants showed that they see us not as an authority above them but as their more or less equals whose ideas do not weigh more than those of the rest. [...] So in the course of the AR with [two ARPs] we managed to reduce the inequality between us as ‘adults’ and ‘funders’ and the young people as

'researchers'. The shift of the balance of power became possible by giving them autonomy in the process and more importantly, by showing them that their knowledge had a value of its own, which deserved public presentation, public acknowledgement. (Researcher reflection, ARRP, p26)

- *Facilitated participatory action research* – where adults facilitate a process of participatory learning for change, but without seeking to promote a particular agenda:

Thus, we come together on a common approach of accompaniment which tends to reveal social practices (role of facilitator) rather than to orient them according to our own conceptions. (Researcher reflection, ARRR, p15)

In AR, learning is collaborative and ongoing, both for the invited participants and for the professional researchers. The AR process provided an opportunity for researchers to reflect on and reanimate their role.

Our role in the discussion was to moderate, stimulate the opinions of all the members, listen and summarize. (Researcher reflection, ARRB, p13)

Changing conventional identity roles is however not always easy as reflected in the following quote:

We opted to 'give the floor' to the young people, attempting to reduce as much as possible our 'adult' and 'expert' power to define, to speak, to decide 'on the behalf' of the youngsters. Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact that is somehow impossible to give up completely with our position (and our power), as 'adults' and as 'omniscient researchers', even though keeping a constant attention in trying to build non-hierarchical relationships among us. (Researcher reflection, ARRB, p14-15)

These insights from the ARPs tend to contradict the view that adult/ professional roles when young people participate are problematic, instead offering a further contribution to understanding participation as a relational process. In so doing, the learning from these projects discussed here offers new opportunities for reanimating adult/ professional roles as co-inquiry-based reflexive practice with young people.

6.3. Implications for policy and practice

AR is about challenging assumptions. The AR of projects has contributed to a deepening of understanding about what it means for young people to participate through learning from practice for the young people involved as well as researchers. In doing so, it has in turn generated some important issues and questions for policy and practice.

Far from assumptions that young people are disengaged, the projects in the AR demonstrate that young people are on the contrary very engaged. They have a strong **desire for recognition** and having their views and practices acknowledged, valued and 'accepted'. This is not just about what is recognized as participation, but also about the status of young people in our societies. Policy could usefully direct attention to the positive contribution young people can

and are making to society in different ways and ensure the necessary resources and support are in place in practice to support that happening.

Predominant forms of participation emphasise formal and non-formal contexts. In the AR there is substantial evidence indicating that many young people find settings that are tightly structured (such as schools) can restrict their ability to participate fully. In contrast, settings that provide **freedom for young people to exercise their own agency more fully**, experiment, be creative and so forth offer more meaningful contexts for participation. Young people show themselves to be competent and able to participate in different ways. They do not need so much control and restriction on when, where and how they participate. Instead, there is a need to challenge 'fixed outcome' approaches to projects that can hamper creativity and undermine original project intentions. More attention needs to be focused on creating '**uncontrolled spaces**' for young people to explore, experiment, exercise their creativity, articulate their ideas and express their values as **autonomous and self-determining citizens**. This would allow their own unique pathways and modes to develop and feed into wider more formal processes as is appropriate.

At the same time as arguing for freeing up approaches to participation in research and governance processes, we can simultaneously observe a **broadening the concept of participation**. Participation and active citizenship are not just about involvement in decision-making but about social and civic participation - being a 'part' of, not 'apart' from, civic society. Young people are participating in a myriad of ways through the way they live their life, according to their own values and socio-cultural practices, through the decisions and actions they take within the different contexts they live and through the different ways they contribute to public life. The idea of 'participation' therefore encompasses various equally meaningful dimensions including identity work (individual and collective), expressing lived experience through youth sub cultural activity and articulating their own judgements of taste.

One of the most significant findings from the AR is the extent to which we can understand the value of **participation as a process** rather than a pre-ordained concrete practice to achieve some pre-defined outcomes. 'Styles' of participation can therefore be identified more accurately in terms of diverse **lived social practices**. There is not a one size fits all with participation. Instead participation varies according to the values and orientations of different groups of young people and at different life stages and in different contexts. There is a need for opportunities for young people to participate more freely and autonomously in ways that are meaningful for them, in particular uncontrolled spaces for young people to experiment and be creative. Emphasis in research and governance could usefully be placed on ensuring more time and space for the process of participation to emerge more flexibly in different contexts.

More specifically, the projects have revealed **participatory processes as dynamic learning processes**, involving reflexive learning in and from action. On the one hand, learning in participatory processes involves a process of creative emergence, as ideas and solutions emerge out of collaborative problem solving. At the same time, learning involves identity work as young people struggle for recognition in understanding who they are in the world. In this respect individual and collective participation are always in a creative tension as individuals and groups and in turn wider society become mutually reinforcing.

There is a paradox at play with youth participation. On the one hand there is concern about the apparent marginalization and alienation of young people, on the other hand, when seeking to encourage youth participation there is either a push to involve young people in heavily structured pre-defined settings which often further alienate young people; or emphasis is placed on youth-led processes which also reinforces the separateness of young people. Whilst young people may choose to participate within the boundaries of their own groups, there is substantial evidence to suggest that young people do not often want to be left to their own devices but actively seek the involvement, collaboration and engagement with adults and professionals, albeit without the restrictions of controlled agendas. In terms of fostering inclusion and democratic involvement, attention is needed on understanding youth participation in relation to, rather than apart from, wider society. **Actively seeking joint processes, cooperation and dialogue between young people and adults/ professionals** (rather than discriminating against them) is imperative if young people are to achieve any sense of inclusion as equal citizens. This does not necessarily mean encouraging young people into adult/professional worlds but also vice versa as well as establishing jointly created agenda. Mutual learning thorough doing together can be conceptualized as an alternative approach to participation emerging from this work.

Partispace has revealed the importance of ensuring young people have opportunities for developing their own unique pathways to being involved in the public. If politicians and professionals genuinely want to progress young people's participation in policy making and civic society there needs to be a **coming together of professional and political systems and agenda with young people's lifeworlds**. This needs to involve professionals and politicians hearing where young people are at on their own terms rather than just for their own institutional agenda and allowing young people's priorities inform political agenda. This should also involve a sharing of power and resources to young people and the institutions and projects that are important to them.

The developments we are discussing here to enable and enhance youth participation require a different set of **relationships between young people and adult/professionals**. Giving more power to young people does not mean giving all power as findings reveal that professionals also have an important role to play in such relationships, in providing support, encouragement, as a critical friend or guide and to help mediate barriers and pitfalls. What is needed is to change conventional professional identities and practices away from the 'expert' who directs to the interpretive, reflexive, social pedagogue who facilitates supports and enables; one who is versed in collaborative approaches to co-inquiry that enable youth participation as a joint enterprise.

Finally, it is clear that participation involves a learning process in which individuals gradually develop the means to participate through practice. Politicians and professionals should **encourage participation of the young at a much earlier age** in early childhood not after they are 18. In some early education settings this happens, but then is lost in secondary education contexts. However, learning for participation should not be interpreted simply as citizenship education in schools, but as a lived practice in all areas of the young person's life.

7. References

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