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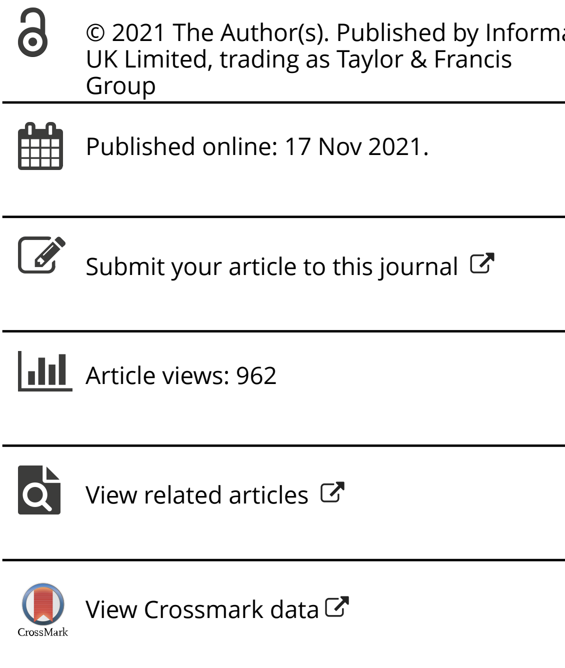

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Epistemic Justice as a Political Capability of Radicalised Youth in Europe: A Case of Knowledge Production with Local Researchers*

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ABSTRACT
This article has sought to explain a research process where a senior researcher felt the need to form an alliance with local researchers in order to enable more authentic research with marginalised youngsters. The aim of this paper is to suggest a useful model demonstrating the focal role of the primary investigator in creating an inclusive and participatory setting to produce knowledge challenging epistemic injustices. By cooperating with novice researchers in the countries we study, our methodology recognised and fostered their epistemic agency. As knowledge mediators, they helped us access many self-identified Muslim youth and native youths who are labelled as far-right in Europe. In addition to emphasising the relevance of local setting in knowledge production, the paper will also question the *epistemic injustice* that these youngsters have been exposed to. Both groups have been clustered in two distinct categories by previous research that has been overwhelmingly engaged in the civilisational discourse that sets these groups apart in two culturally, religiously and civilisationally defined boxes. We believe that our participatory commitment to producing high-quality knowledge will be helpful in the scientific consideration of socio-economically, politically, spatially, and nostalgically deprived youths, who feel pressurised by the perils of modernisation and globalisation.

KEYWORDS
Radicalism; nativism; Islamism; deprivation; epistemic justice; knowledge production

Introduction

This article examines the capability to produce scientific knowledge and the personal, social and institutional structures that enable, or constrain, the conditions for knowledge creation among socio-economically and spatially

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deprived segments of the European youth. The aim is to suggest a useful model demonstrating the focal role of the principal investigator (PI) in creating a setting that includes novice researchers and young research participants to produce knowledge challenging epistemic injustices. Following Christopher Hookway's (2010) lead, we posit that what happens before a research team's encounter with the participant is also important and needs to receive attention for the importance of cooperative epistemic endeavours of research team members. In our project, the research team took the novice researchers' contributions to our epistemic pursuit as central and allowed them to guide the data collection through their choice in the communities they worked with and the transcription style they used. We demonstrate the application of this model utilising a concrete example taken from an ongoing ERC Advanced Grant research project we are currently conducting with self-identified Muslim youth with migration background and native youngsters labelled as far-right (aged 18-30), living in remote places in Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Creating a democratic condition for the research team members to practice their epistemic agency comfortably was especially essential and helpful to find and communicate with youngsters who are accustomed to being silenced due to their religious, ethnic or ideological alignments.

The article elaborates on the reflexive alliance built across different research settings and describes the dynamic processes of knowledge production among research team members. In the following sections, we first describe the process which initiated the PI to design this collaborative epistemic pursuit among four junior researchers. In addition to emphasising the relevance of local setting in knowledge production and the benefits of the participatory research process among the researchers, the article also questions the epistemic injustice that these youngsters have been exposed to and supports its claims by reflecting upon some of the utterances from the field. To that effect, the paper also sheds light on the similar experiences of marginalisation, alienation, humiliation, and social, economic, and political deprivation, put forward by the research participants. The aim behind studying both native and Muslim European youths here is to challenge the hegemony of culturalist and civilizational discourse prevailing in Europe over the last three decades and revisit social, economic, political, and psychological drivers of radicalisation.

Recognising the Epistemic Injustice Some Youth Experience and Setting the Stage for the Current Research

Epistemic justice is a political capability, i.e. one's freedom to express political ideas, engage in politics, protest, and be free from state repression (Cin 2017). Fricker's (2007) definition of epistemic injustice is a significant aspect of the political capabilities of an individual. If an individual cannot have an enabling environment to exercise political capability, this is regarded as

"political poverty" or political deprivation. In this sense, epistemic injustice refers to the political poverty of citizens to effectively participate in social and political life to contribute to their society by exploiting legitimate channels such as local, national and European parliaments, political parties, labour unions, and mainstream media. To put it differently, political poverty, or political deprivation, means a failure to take part in public deliberation to raise one's concerns and to receive recognition from others (Bohman 1996). Politically alienated groups such as self-identified Muslim youth and youngsters labelled as far-right extremists lack political and economic capabilities for full participation in public life through legitimate channels. The lack of inclusive public reasoning as the space for deliberation may prevent people from being fully included in the public space or prevent them from becoming who they are (Sen 1999). In this regard, being an epistemic supplier would require these democratic, deliberative and communicative conditions because they are essential to fostering political efficacy for those who are politically marginalised (Bohman 1996).

According to Miranda Fricker (2007), there are two forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical. *Testimonial injustice* becomes prevalent when a social group suffers from credibility and lacks trustworthiness due to their social identity and faces discrimination in access to goods and services. Testimonial exclusion is often observed in various contexts where discrimination becomes structural due to the fact that institutions are inclined to discriminate and exclude some people on the basis of their ethno-cultural, religious, and class differences (Anderson 2012). On the other hand, *hermeneutical injustice* is defined as a practice that occurs when a society fails to interpret or understand the speaker's experiences due to the fact that the speaker belongs to a social group that has been prejudicially marginalised (Fricker 2007). As far as the universe of research discussed in the scope of this article is concerned, both "self-identified Muslims" and "youngsters labelled as far-right" suffering from socio-economic, spatial and political deprivation can be argued to have experienced both testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice over the last few decades.

Many scholars have detected that the underclass appeared in the post-industrial states after the decline of the welfare state, which aimed to integrate the lower classes into the system in the West, upon the breakdown of the sense of community (Faist et al. 2015). Closely observing the social movements, which mainly derived from the underclass urban communities in the form of ethnic, religious, or racial antagonism, the New Right economic-social policies have deprived a certain number of people of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of citizenship since the 1990s. The greater the number of young people who lose their economic power and get outside the traditional class system, the less youngsters benefit from their civil, political, social and cultural rights (MacDonald and Marsh 2001).

During those social and political developments, youth as underclass members and their connection with powerful institutions have become interesting topics of investigation. Many states declared an unnamed war against the youth cultures (Williamson 1997; Keith 1995; Lipsitz 1994). Power holders' confrontation with youth can be seen as part of an attack on the welfare state, public schooling, and democratic culture during the New Right era starting from the late 1970s. It is also quite remarkable to see how the media have been scapegoating youth, especially working-class, migrant, and minority youths, as the source of social problems and the escalation of violence in urban space (Bessant and Hill 1997). The rising representation of youths as criminals in the USA, Britain, France, and several other countries avoids critical commentary on the connections between the escalation of violence in society and the role of poverty and social conditions in promoting violence (Giroux 1996). Media usually depict youth as decadent, corrupt, and in need of discipline and control. Giroux (1996) argued that the misrepresentation and scapegoating of youth through negative media images and discourses are efforts to justify cutbacks in education and harsher criminal penalties.

The ideology of New Right has turned the state into a minimal state, abstracting it from social, economic, and cultural spheres and imprisoning it into the security realm in alliance with domestic militarisation (Giroux 2001). Lack of recreational space is another outcome of the New Right policies. Recreational space is now privatised as a profit-making venture. There are fewer youth centres, city public parks, outdoor basketball courts, or empty fields where kids can play football (Giroux 2001; Kaya 2001). Play areas are now rented out to the highest bidder. Young people are increasingly excluded from public spaces outside schools that once offered them the opportunity to hang out in secure places, work with mentors in youth centres, and develop their skills. Giroux (2001) addressed earlier that the social costs and implications of removing youth from the inventory of ethical and political policies dictates of a repressive penal state in which government addresses social problems through the police, courts, and prison system.

The PI of the currently ongoing research has been studying changing youth cultures in European contexts for two decades. Long before starting the current research project, he observed the emergence of underclass youth in the late twentieth century. Initially, he studied Turkish Hip-Hop youth in Kreuzberg, Berlin. His main motivation was to understand the processes of young people's sense-making of political and social exclusion in Europe, as well as their response to growing racism and intersectional forms of discrimination in everyday life (Kaya 2001; Kaya 2002; Kaya 2007; Kaya and Kentel 2008). The PI's years of researching disadvantaged youth have convinced him that they do have a voice and express their opinions through artwork, protest music, graffiti, dance, rap, popular culture, and acts of compassion.

At the time of his initial research, he was an international researcher from Turkey, finishing his Ph.D. in the UK. His research biography, welcoming approach and research activities across borders attracted his young and marginalised research participants' interests. Following a strand of methodology that underlines the importance of relatable relationship generated between research participants and researchers (Horowitz 1983, 1986; Adler, Adler, and Burke Rochford 1986), the PI of the current research has gathered and presented the viewpoints of marginalised and disadvantaged youth in the past two decades. Being a member of an underrepresented group who has managed to enter the formal scientific community might have helped him receive a warm welcome from the kind of communities he wanted to access. This methodological approach is especially important for youth as it supports young research participants to further their understandings of how they can make their voices matter. To explore this approach, here, we seek help from participatory action research literature and bring our own methodological interpretation, which involved not only participants, in the traditional sense, but also young researchers.

Participatory Action Research: Distancing the Experienced Researcher from the Field and Allowing the Novice Researcher to Find and Interact with Research Participants

Amartya Sen's (2009) capability approach helps articulate the claim that equitably sharing the benefits of scientific knowledge requires the distribution of the capability to produce and use new scientific knowledge as a prerequisite for human and economic development. Seen from the perspective of the capability approach, therefore, scientific knowledge creation becomes part of the capability set that can empower developing societies to redraw the boundaries of development. As such, it cannot be construed only as an individual good. The idea of collaboration of scientific community members and researchers working together to solve problems, thus, is necessary for scientific development and social change. For us, such an approach to knowledge generation is concerned both with changing the lives of individuals and changing the research cultures and institutions (Schneider 2012). We prefer to include everyone involved in the research, including the intermediaries, interviewers, desk researchers, the PI as well as research participants in this participatory and collaborative process. Whereas research method literature discusses the researcher's reflexivity extensively (Ben-Ari and Enosh 2011), the researcher has always been thought of as singular. Living in a scientific era that celebrates research collaboration greatly, we believe that the participatory processes within research teams have not received adequate scholarly attention.

Participatory Processes among Research Team Members

PAR stresses the empowerment and the rights of research participants and emphasises the reciprocal nature of the research encounter and the focal role of participants. To put it differently, research participants become full research partners who are also engaged in knowledge construction by theorising and collecting evidence (McTaggart 2010). We believe knowledge production among the members of a research project presents a different and significant layer of participatory research. In our case, the research team made some shifts in power dynamics and allowed local research members to work with them during the different phases of the project to get their input.

Following the work of Enosh, Ben-Ari, and Buchbinder (2008), we consider a sense of differentness as the origin of knowledge construction. Sense of differentness involves the realisation of a phenomenon that attracts attention. It needs to be explored and understood. We posit that such exploration starts a process of reflection that leads to the emergence of new knowledge. To reach there, researchers need to be tuned toward that which is implicit rather than self-evident or given. Researchers' reflexivity may be characterised by two processes, one of *discovery* and one of *construction* (Enosh and Ben-Ari 2015). The researcher strives to identify inconsistencies and, having done so, treats them as sources of new knowledge; thus, researchers combine both processes when reflecting on the studied phenomena. Such activity may lead researchers to a new way of conceptualising the meaning of previously acquired information in collaboration and dialogue with other researchers. This new interaction also brings the researcher to a liminal space, involving the constant movement between different levels of reflection, which are constituted by inconsistencies and the recognition of differentness. In our research project, there has been a constant process of deliberation among the members of the research team. Such deliberation enabled research team members to find common ground through interlocution. With this paper, we would like to emphasise that this plurality of liminal spaces promises a rich potential for the emergence of new knowledge.

Our research project examines young people, whether native or of immigrant-origin, who experience marginalisation, alienation, and humiliation and face the detrimental effects of globalisation such as deindustrialisation, socio-economic deprivation and spatial deprivation. As we have discussed extensively in our previous publications, the current objectification of "radicalised individuals" is problematic for several reasons (Benevento 2021; Adam-Troian, Tecmen, and Kaya 2021; Kaya 2020). Radicalisation is a process that appears to be a defensive and reactionary response of various individuals suffering from social, economic and political forms of exclusion, subordination, alienation and isolation. The politics of historical representation of radicalised individuals warrants "the epistemic harm" (Spivak 2010) of subject-formation and the consequent silencing of the youth we are concerned. By accepting

radicalisation as a way to express one's views, we emancipated possibilities of hearing the *other*.

Within the scope of our project, we observed that while a number of native youth groups are shifting towards right-wing populism and nativism, a number of self-identified Muslim youths are shifting towards Islamic radicalism. Both groups differ though in their responses to the flows of globalisation as they have different "cultural repertoires" (Tilly 1977) that are characterised by nativist/nationalist and/or religious content. The common trait of these groups is that they are both downwardly mobile, and some are inclined towards radicalisation, which hints at a particular way of thinking, and does not always indicate violent action. Hence, our project aims to scrutinise social, economic, political and psychological sources of the processes of radicalisation among native European youth and self-identified Muslim youth with migration background, who are both inclined to express their discontent through ethnicity, culture, religion, heritage, homogeneity, authenticity, past, gender and patriarchy. After anticipating that the local context becomes especially important in pointing out the reasons or sources of such inclinations, the PI formed an alliance with four local researchers to deliberate on what local contexts (e.g. cities, neighbourhoods, organisations, etc.) are best to test these claims and receive their help in connecting with young people.

In the current project, we sought to explore our research participants' reactions to global changes as well as their local perceptions in the four European countries. Grasswick (2017) identifies two forms of local knowledge: one is gathered in the course of living in or observing a particular environment or population, and the other accumulates the practical "know-how" that is specific to that place or group of people. While the PI had experience and capacity of working with European Muslim youth with migrant origin throughout his professional research career, his contact with far-right native youth has been limited. As a researcher from Turkey, while he was in a unique position of having intimate knowledge and experience of, and relationships with, Muslim youth, he also presented many of the stereotypical outsider characteristics on entering the field with native youth in Europe. This "active inbetweener" (Milligan 2016) status required him to reflect on his positioning in conducting research in those countries and inhabit an insider identity on a professional level by recruiting local researchers that would seem appealing and less threatening for both participant profiles.

These four local researchers directly influenced the research process by choosing the cities and the regions they deemed worthy of collecting data in line with the objectives of the research, recruited research participants from the field, conducted, and transcribed their interviews with no audio recordings. The PI guided a dialectical process by organising a workshop for the team to exchange their observations about the country specific details. Because the research argues that local aspects are as important as national and global

developments, the team wanted to magnify the contemporary history of each city in which the researchers conducted interviews with both native and Muslim-origin youngsters as far as the processes of deindustrialisation, unemployment, poverty, exclusion, alienation, and isolation are concerned. The local researchers selected those cities and the regions where they felt a sense of differentness (Enosh, Ben-Ari, and Buchbinder 2008) in terms of the detrimental effects of globalisation on young populations. After the selection, they informed the team about the local socio-economic, political, demographic and ethno-cultural dynamics that may help the research better examine the current forms of youth radicalisation in those places. Written accounts about those places are published and publicised in the project website.

The practice of selecting the settings for research to happen required a dialogical process in which the research team continually discussed the potential of different places, organisations, research participants, intermediaries, etc. Although the conjunction of the COVID19 Pandemic and our field work caused a major setback in terms of recruitment, academia's quick transitioning to the technology-mediated platforms greatly benefited our research to become more participatory and dialogical. Research team members frequently organised virtual meetings one-on-one or in groups. The normalisation of transnational online meetings helped us gather and discuss the opportunities and the challenges we experience as a research team.

Among the four researchers, three were Ph.D. students and one was an early-career scholar. All four were natives and three were female. They all had similar research interests aligned with the topic of the project and were familiar with the participant profile in their respective countries. Two of them, for instance, knew Turkish and have studied migrant populations in their respective countries. The diversity of the researchers' characteristics, qualifications, and methodological preferences created opportunities for a participatory research process in which the research team deliberated continuously and reviewed their research practices throughout the fieldwork.

Hookway (2010) argues that discussion and deliberation about epistemic matters are crucial to forwarding collaborative knowledge construction in science. He claims that research progress depends upon an inclusive and participatory division of labour among research members. In our research, recruiting novice researchers to support the project was prolific for both the project and the field researchers. First, the PI felt the need to distance himself from the research field after working with many migrant-origin Muslim youngsters in Europe throughout the years. On the one hand, his international research portfolio and Turkish background benefitted his relationship with marginalised youngsters and allowed him to build a long-lasting research network in Europe. On the other hand, allowing new researchers to select the communities and places to conduct the new study permitted the possibility that the past findings might be refuted, perspectives and voices heard might be fresh and

that the PI's scholarly influence would be counterbalanced by the field researchers' input and presence. Accepting young, local, and novice researchers' support on the task of choosing where and how to access research participants allowed the research to enter spaces both within and outside the communities, which PI would not have otherwise been able to as an outsider researcher, an adult, and a non-speaker of the native language.

Second, the research team gained professional experience and new perspectives in the research process. The PI was at a distance yet, approachable and in touch with the field researchers in every step of the way. The PI supported the field process by organising workshops and virtual meetings for the team to practice interviewing, gave feedback on and re-wrote the interview guide, exchange their proven to be helpful strategies, observations and country-specific details from the field. The field researchers had claimed and later reported that the kind of questions (e.g. "Can you please talk about yourself?", "How do you find the neighbourhood you live in?") asked in the interviews and their practices of *listening to speech acts* (Spivak 2010) removed the research participants from the *subject* status and allowed them to open up and spontaneously illustrate the kinds of internal values they have rather than simply announcing their political, religious positions. The field researchers' efforts to *listen* (Spivak 2010), allowed research participants to sometimes enact conflicting beliefs they have and negotiate their dilemmatic mix of values during the conversations.

The field researchers also included their personal remarks about the participant profile and local settings (e.g. what they wore, how they spoke, where they met, how they felt, etc.), which enriched interpretations of transcriptions from a distance. The desk researchers and the PI organised periodic meetings with the field researchers to exchange thoughts on the main method of analysis, preliminary arguments and share insights on specific country contexts and narratives. These meetings permitted the research members to repeatedly update and revise research materials as well as the findings. For instance, the team decided to make a few minor changes to the questionnaire after receiving negative feedback from the research participants and discussing places where the transcriptions sounded unclear. One of the tangible results of this interactive and participatory research process was the article that the field researchers co-authored about their data collection strategies (Benevento et al. n.d.) We believe that the commitment to conduct the research in this new way helped the young researchers practice their professional skills and contributed to the overall knowledge production process.

Understanding the Two Youth Groups Dealing with Epistemic Injustice Everyday

The participant fieldwork experiences of the PI based on *emic* viewpoints have often demonstrated that both groups have been subject to the labels and

identifications imposed on them by the majority societies. The former was labelled simply as "Muslims", and the latter as "right-wing extremists". The current research confirms the work that the PI has so far undertaken. His research reveals that both groups of youngsters, self-identified Muslims with migration background and youngsters labelled as far-right, have been exposed to a growing stream of two forms of epistemic injustice in the age of globalism: testimonial and hermeneutical injustices.

Both youth groups in Europe often experience marginalisation at two levels: first as a minority, hard-to-reach religious and/or ethno-cultural group, and second as a vulnerable age group whose practices of knowledge, knowing, and being a knower are often undermined by elders and the political establishment. Both groups have also been clustered in two distinct categories by researchers who have been overwhelmingly engaged in the "civilisational discourse" (Brubaker 2017) that sets these groups apart in two culturally, religiously, and civilisationally defined distinct boxes. The category of "Muslims" created by the research community has been an empty signifier since it addresses a very diversified group of people with different nationalities, world views, ethnicities, sects, age and gender. Similarly, the label of "right-wing extremists" also bears problems since it does not let the reader see the diversity of claims, expectations, and critics of the youngsters in this category raised against the status quo. This is why the local researchers came up with a different strategy to approach these youngsters. One and perhaps the most fruitful outcome of allowing local researchers to guide the data collection effort has been their ability to adjust recruitment strategies to both Muslim and native youth by suggesting to address our research participants differently. Based on the assumption that they were constantly exposed to different forms of epistemic injustice, our research team identified the first group of youngsters as "self-identified Muslims" and the latter as "youngsters labelled as far-right". The main rationale of this strategy was to demonstrate that the research team did not want to work with the labels imposed on these groups by the majority societies. Instead, youngsters are expected to speak out by themselves in their own contexts, showing their capability for knowledge production.

As Kurt Lewin, one of the first scholars who developed participatory action research to work with ethno-cultural minorities in the US in the 1940s, demonstrated earlier, research studies with small groups operated most successfully when they were conducted in a democratic manner. We also followed this logic in our studies. Based on this democratic, inclusive and participatory approach, we also believe that research should try empower and help individuals and social groups to gain self-confidence and self-determination. As already stated by many PAR researchers (Lewin 1946; McTaggart 2010; Schneider 2012; Stringer 2014; Walker 2018), we also argue that allowing individuals to actively engage with research can help them seek independence, equality and cooperation. As will be soon discussed in the following paragraphs, our

research proceeds on the premise that there are no generalisable solutions when engaging research participants, who are expected to adopt to the changing circumstances and needs in everyday life. As a research team, we have perceived participation as an essential pillar in our action research approach since "action research works on the assumption that all people who affect, or are affected, by the issue investigated should be included in the process of inquiry" (Stringer 2014, 6). To that effect, we will be demonstrating in what follows the ways in which our research participants have been engaged in our democratic, inclusive and participatory approach to express their reactions to global and local changes in everyday life.

Resorting towards either Islam or nativism seems to be operational for both groups to demonstrate their reaction to their political deprivation. Self-identified Muslim youth tend to become more religious to show their reaction to political poverty since they are convinced that they are exposed to testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice in everyday life. Youngsters labelled as far-right extremists, on the other hand, tend to become more nativist, nationalist, Islamophobist, anti-multiculturalist and anti-globalist to show their reaction to political deprivation since they believe that they are not only exposed to testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice but also to spatial and nostalgic deprivation (Rodrigues-Pose 2018; Gest, Reny, and Mayer 2017). During the participant observation and in-depth interviews, our researchers reported that youngsters have been very expressive in bringing these elements to the fore when they constantly talked about their feeling of being in geographically and politically remote places in relation to the political centres where decisions are taken such as Berlin, Brussels, Paris, and Amsterdam. Research participants have also been very expressive in stating their nostalgic feelings towards the homogeneous and authentic past, which has now apparently remained behind the mist of the rapidly changing, diverse and mobile world in the present time. This is actually a form of politics initiated by outsider groups as opposed to the kind of politics generated by "those within" as Alistair MacIntyre (1971) decoded earlier. Those who are politically poor and deprived tend to empower their agency by aligning themselves with religious, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic acts and discourses. According to MacIntyre (1971), there are two forms of politics: *politics of those within* and *politics of those excluded*. Those *within* tend to employ legitimate political institutions (parliament, political parties, the media) in pursuing their goals, and those *excluded* resort to honour, culture, ethnicity, religion, roots and tradition in doing the same. It should be noted here that MacIntyre (1971) does not place culture in the private space; culture is rather inherently located in the public space. Therefore, the main motive behind the development of religious and ethno-cultural inclinations by politically disenfranchised migrant-origin and self-identified native groups may be perceived as their concern to be attached to the political-public sphere. To put it differently, for such politically disenfranchised groups, the

language of religion and culture can be interpreted as a way of showing their quest for epistemological justice. This justice is not secured for them by the hegemonic political centre.

Self-identified Muslim youngsters are more likely to resort to religion to come to terms with testimonial injustice in everyday life. Religion is an important cultural source for the formation of identity among young self-identified Muslims. However, religion no longer has an essentialist stance, but rather a symbolic meaning for the third and later generations of the Muslim diasporas. Resorting to Islam does not necessarily mean that they are less civically French, German, Dutch or Belgian. On the contrary, they often express how much they feel at ease with being German, French, Dutch and Belgian rather than being Turkish, or Moroccan. The significance of religion for youth lies in the fact that these young people are perceived in a prejudiced manner by majority societies. Most of the time, the members of majority societies use Islam as the main reference point when defining young people from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Turkey. For example, young adults of North or Central African origin, defined as Islamic by the general French, or Belgian publics, believe that their identities are recognised, or misrecognised, with prejudice. As a reaction, they show increasing symbolic loyalty to religion. This is a kind of reactionary radicalism in the sense that Craig Calhoun (2011) defined. Craig Calhoun (2011) makes a three-fold classification of radicalism: *philosophical radicalism*, *tactical radicalism*, and *reactionary radicalism*. *Philosophical radicalism of theorists* was about penetrating the roots of society with rational and analytical programmes to understand the structural transformation of the public sphere. *Tactical radicalism of activists* was mainly about their search for immediate change that required violence and other extreme actions to achieve it. Finally, *reactionary radicalism of those* suffering from the detrimental effects of modernisation is more about their quest to save what they valued in communities and cultural traditions from eradication by capitalism. In this sense, growing affiliation with Islam of self-identified young Muslims in the diaspora since the 9/11 terrorist attacks can be perceived as a form of reactionary radicalism, which is based on the idea of search for democracy. Quest for democracy is not a threat to democracy but rather a critic of the testimonial injustice that these young people with different ethno-cultural and religious backgrounds experience in everyday life. This critic is often present in expressions concerning interest in unconventional forms of political participation such as street protests, veiling, graffiti, and music.

An example of this process can be seen among the Turkish-origin youngsters living in Germany. A Berlin-based Turkish-German rap group in the 1990s explained the choice of *Islamic Force* as its name mainly on the grounds that they wanted to protest the prejudiced attitude of the German majority towards Islam, and sought to provoke them further. Interestingly, *Islamic*

Force was a rap group of a predominantly universal discourse, as opposed to its name (Kaya 2001). This is a process of vernacularisation of Islam in diaspora whereby religion becomes more individualised in line with the changing needs of individuals who are subject to collective impacts due to the ongoing structural outsiderism, intersectional discrimination and everyday racism. Thus, Islamic space becomes a space in which post-migrants, or trans-migrants, search for recognition. Islamic allegiance by those youths could also be interpreted as a quest for emancipation from the parental culture, which imprisoned religion in their interpretation of authentic culture. Hence, diasporic youth who are symbolically affiliated with Islam rather has a political stance. This is a stance which goes beyond the separation between religion and politics. The reality in Europe today is that young Muslims are becoming politically mobilised to support causes that have less to do with faith and more to do with communal solidarity with others who experience minorisation. The manifestation of global Muslim solidarity can be described as an identity based on vicarious humiliation: European Muslims develop empathy for Muslim victims elsewhere in the world and convince themselves that their exclusion and that of their coreligionists have the same root cause: *The Western rejection of Islam*.

The interviews conducted with *youngsters labelled as far-right* revealed that mainstream political parties and their supporters often tend to marginalise, humiliate and corner right-wing populist parties and their supporters, thereby stigmatising them and their followers as "racists", "fascists", "Nazis", and "failures" (Kaya 2019). Many of the research participants expressed their humiliation at being thus stigmatised and stated that they were becoming even more alienated by political parties in the centre. This practice of stigmatisation in everyday life seems then to further contribute to the dissention from mainstream politics of marginalised and stigmatised individuals, who have already been experiencing some social, economic, political, spatial, and nostalgic deprivation.

Both groups are also subject to hermeneutical injustice because they are not taken seriously as narrators of their experiences due to prejudicial epistemic marginalisation. The members of both groups are mostly deprived of epistemic capability as they are not given access to legitimate channels such as the local, national, European parliaments, or mainstream media to express their socioeconomic, political, and cultural concerns. The epistemic capability provides individuals with the opportunity to develop mutual esteem and friendly trust with the larger social and political environment in which they live. The lack of epistemic capability, on the contrary, may lead to the development of radical and centrifugal identities that challenge the status quo (Walker 2019; Walker and Loots 2018).

As will be shortly demonstrated in reference to the testimonies and theoretical premises of our ongoing participant action research on youth radicalisation, the lack of epistemic capability can be practiced differently by self-identified

Muslim youth and self-identified native youth. Most of our self-identified Muslim research participants have often underlined their commitment/involvement in street demonstrations organised to show solidarity with their Muslim peers suffering in Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Xinjiang Uyghur region of China. There was also a small minority expressing their support for some street demonstrations organised by some native groups such as "Yellow Wests Demonstrations" in France and "Black Lives Matter" demonstrations all over Europe. If the street demonstrations are about showing solidarity with the Muslims in the other parts of the world, then there is a strong tendency to take part in such demonstrations actively. The statement made by a 30-year-old-Moroccan male is exemplary in this sense. He said the following when asked what he thinks about taking part in street demonstrations:

> Before, there were more demonstrations, particularly on strictly political issues, linked to international news. When I was younger, I remember taking part in demonstrations for Palestine … We already felt that it was useless, but it allowed us to show our number, to show that there were many of us who were revolted by what was happening in Palestine. It allowed us to shout, *to express our anger* … (interview conducted in Paris, 6 September 2020, italics ours).

Islam is no longer simply a religion but also a counter-hegemonic global political movement, which prompts many Muslims to stand up for justice and against tyranny – whether in Palestine, Syria, Kashmir, Iraq, Lebanon, or Syria. They are more likely to set up a link between such perceived tyranny in remote Muslim lands and their countries of settlement that are somehow thought to be responsible for the subordination of their Muslim peers.

Radicalisation of Muslim-origin youngsters is a reaction to the ways in which they perceive to be subordinated by their countries of settlement because radicalisation might provide them with an opportunity to build an imagined home away from the one that has become indifferent and alienating. Radicalisation then becomes a regime of justification and an alternative form of politics generated by some Muslim youth to protect themselves from day-to-day discrimination. They believe that speaking from the margins might be a more efficient strategy to be heard by the ones in the centre who have lost the ability to listen to the peripheral ones. In other words, speaking from the margins may resonate as an alternative form of epistemic capability for the politically disempowered ones to draw the public's attention to their marginalisation. As Robert Young (2004, 5) pointed out, it is not that "they" do not know how to speak (politics), "but rather that the dominant would not listen." Epistemic injustice is visible here as the self-identified Muslim youngsters are exposed to several different kinds of intersectional discrimination.

Those youngsters who are labelled as far-right extremists tend to use different "tactics" (De Certeau 1984) to overcome the hermeneutical injustice

that they are exposed to. For the self-identified native youth who mostly live in remote places in Europe, developing right-wing nativism and Islamophobism seems to be a response to and rejection of the order imposed by cosmopolitan, globalist, and neoliberal elites, an order that fails to use the resources of the democratic nation-state to harness global processes for local needs and desires (Mouffe 2018). Such epistemic injustice results from deep-rooted structural disparities and general disadvantage that mainstream political parties have so far actively contributed to in their neoliberal governance. It is this kind of epistemic injustice that has contributed to the rise of right-wing anti-systemic populist discourse in Europe. Hence, right-wing populism can be interpreted as a discourse of the disempowered individuals living in remote places to come to terms with their political, social, economic, and spatial deprivation. Anthropological approaches mostly understand populism as "the moods and sensibilities of the disenfranchised who face the disjuncture between everyday lives that seem to become extremely anomic and uncontainable and the wider public power projects that are out of their reach and suspected of serving their ongoing disenfranchisement" (Kalb 2011, 14; Boyer 2016).

As Andrés Rodrigues-Pose (2018, 196–198), a geographer, put it, populism as a political force has taken hold in many of the so-called "spaces that do not matter" that are creating a systemic risk. Right-wing populist votes have been heavily concentrated in territories that have suffered long-term declines and reflect an increasing urban/rural divide. It is not a surprise then to see that right-wing populism has become a recurring phenomenon in remote places such as Dresden, Rotterdam, Lyon, and Aalst, as well as rural and mountainous places that do not matter anymore for the neo-liberal political parties in the centre that are heavily engaged in the flows of globalisation such as international trade, migration, foreign direct investment and urbanisation. The feelings of being left behind in those remote places that "no longer matter" in the eyes of the political centre may sometimes lead to what one might call "spatial deprivation".

Youth labelled as far-right extremists living in remote places which "no longer matter" tend to become more appealed to the anti-systemic parties such as right-wing populists because of their growing socio-economic disadvantages. However, socio-economic deprivation is not the only factor explaining populism's appeal (Mudde 2016). There are also some cultural and memory factors that play an essential role. Many people nowadays experience what Gest, Reny, and Mayer (2017) call "nostalgic deprivation", which refers to an existential feeling of loss triggered by the dissolution of established notions of identity, culture, nation, and heritage in the age of globalisation. A growing number of young people are now longing for job security, stability, belonging, a sense of a bright future, epistemic justice, and also solidarity among workers (Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012, 318). Similarly, those who live in the areas left behind may also become dissidents against the neo-liberal political centre. Those having

witnessed long periods of decline, migration and brain drain, those that have seen better times and remember them with nostalgia, those that have been repeatedly told that the future lies elsewhere, have used the ballot box as their weapon. Their sons and daughters are not different from their parents. Those who could not go elsewhere for education or work are not left with many options to find a compensatory form of control in everyday life, such as ethno-national radicalism, populism, nativism, and sometimes white-supremacism if not religion. Different forms of deprivation have been prevalent among the native youngsters who live in socio-economically deprived remote places. A 23-year-old male youngster interviewed near Dresden made the following statement when asked about the current economic state of his family:

> After 2005, my father was unemployed twice within ten years. After the reunification he had to go to the KVP [*Kasernierte Volkspolizei*, Barracked People's Police] for a couple of months. The tavern he used to work for was closed. Then he went to the police. He became a cook for the kitchen of the riot police. The kitchen there was privatized in 2006, and after two years around 2007 and 2008 it was closed. He was unemployed for a year. The municipality did a public-private partnership for a prison kitchen, part of the business was tendered privately. A sub-contractor was in charge of the kitchen … He was working in that kitchen for five years between 2009 and 2014 … Instead of a 25-year lasting work contract and pension money, he was unemployed again after four and a half years … (interview in Dresden, 10 October 2020).

Such feelings of socio-economic, spatial and nostalgic deprivation that one could see in an extract taken from the interview often find channels of communication with the outside world through the fear of Islam, migration and diversity, that is highly promoted by right-wing populist parties and movements in Europe. The fear of Islam and migration is also prevalent among the radicalising native youngsters who are labelled as far-right extremists. A 25-year-old native male youngster in Rotterdam said the following when asked about his opinion on the current state of migration in the Netherlands:

> I think we should take care of war victims from Syria, but as soon as it is safe in Syria they should return. I think that is solidarity, you host them in times of war and then they have to go back. But now we are immediately giving these refugees passports and priority on the housing market while there is a huge housing shortage in the Netherlands. I am not a racist but my own people first. Moreover, we do not have the capacity in the Netherlands to receive so many people … The problem is that we have a huge shortage of housing and that refugees also get prioritized for housing (interview in Rotterdam, 29 October 2020).

Populism as a reactionary form of radicalisation is not a disease or irrational anomaly, as it is often portrayed, but as the symptom of structural constraints that have been disregarded by mainstream liberal political parties in power in the last three decades. Populism is a systemic problem with deep structural causes. Populist parties' voters are dissatisfied with and distrustful of mainstream

elites, who are perceived as cosmopolitan, and they are hostile to immigration and growing ethno-cultural and religious diversity. While some of these groups feel economically insecure, their hostility springs from a combination of social-economic, spatial and nostalgic deprivation resulting from their belief that immigrants and ethno-cultural and religious minority groups are threatening societal and national security (Reynié 2016). In other words, the anxieties driving support for these parties are rooted not solely in socio-economic grievances but in cultural fears and a (cultivated) sense of cultural threat coming from globalisation, immigration, multiculturalism, and diversity, which have been stocked by liberals too. Such fear of social-economic, spatial and nostalgic deprivation is likely to bring about a form of reactionary radicalisation (Calhoun 2011) among self-identified native youth residing in remote places, who believe to be epistemologically and politically disempowered and demonstrate the need to generate a defensive form of political mobilisation in alliance with their peers in organised populist parties and social movements (Tilly 1977).

Conclusion

When doing research in different locations, a researcher might find herself/himself in a liminal position where s/he is neither an insider nor an outsider. Milligan (2016) argues that reflecting on the experiences of the inbetweener researcher gives valuable insight into methodological processes while conducting cross-cultural research. This article has sought to explain such a process where a senior researcher felt the need to form an alliance with young, local researchers in order to enable more authentic research with European youngsters. The article stressed the great potential for the use of participative methods among research team members to envision scientific practices that help foster the researchers' epistemic agency.

The research members allowed us to assess the reactionary radicalism of young people as *struggles for democracy* rather than threats to democracy. Specifically, our current research is an attempt to give voice to self-identified Muslim youth and native youths who are labelled as far-right in Europe. Although both groups of youngsters produce narratives that blame each other for the negative outcomes of the socio-political changes, they also share the frustrations of those they exclude. Among the reasons for discontent are the de-industrialisation of former manufacturing environments, marginalisation in the job market, perceived discrimination, insecurity, isolation, housing problems, and humiliation in various social settings. At this historical juncture, our research utilised a single optical lens to analyse the factors and processes behind the radicalisation of European youths. Our fundamental premise is that the economic, political, and cultural shocks led by the flows of globalisation act as a driving force behind radicalisation, be that Islamist or Islamophobist.

The task of studying young people who are marginalised due to their religious or ideological identities poses a number of challenges to researchers. By cooperating with young researchers, whom we shared common interests and research goals, we recognised and fostered their epistemic agency. As knowledge mediators, the local researchers helped the research access many youngsters, who are at the margins of their societies, despite the PI's position as an outsider. All in all, we believe that local researchers appeared less threatening and more familiar for both participant profiles and that they advanced the research quality by minding and bridging the gap between the recent realities of the field and the PI's scholarly influence. By diversifying and increasing the number of the providers of knowledge (novice researchers, marginalised research participants, inexperienced desk researchers, intermediaries from the field), we aimed at expanding credible claims to knowledge legitimacy beyond that of the PI. We believe that our participatory commitment to produce high-quality knowledge not only helped us diversify the pool of research participants but also fostered the novice research members' epistemic abilities to gain understanding through trust in scientific collaboration. We also believe that this research has enabled both local researchers and marginalised youth as research participants in making their voices heard in scientific community. This research has also revealed that novice researchers as well as marginalised youngsters can speak out loud by themselves in their own contexts showing their capability for knowledge production. It is our hope that both of those gains will, in turn, be helpful in the scientific consideration of socioeconomically, politically, spatially, and nostalgically deprived youths, who feel pressurised by the perils of modernisation and globalisation.

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