

Master's Thesis Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship

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Participatory sense-making of citizenship within the context of municipality-led citizen participation

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“Berge sind die Orte, wo die Gegenentwürfe von Gesellschaft und Stadt überleben. Es sind Orte, wo man sich der Welt überhaupt bewusst wird.“

“Mountains are places where the counter-projects of the society and city survive. These are places where we create an awareness of this world.”
- Boris Sieverts

My Journey to Social Engagement

It was the last Friday of April in 2023. In the afternoon, I was on my way to the “Bürgerhaus Kalk” (citizen house Kalk), which is a social and cultural space located in the center of Kalk, the borough on the right side of the Rhine of Cologne. The “Bürgerhaus Kalk” organized workshops, events, performances, and political dialogues are organized. I left home and went to the metro station, and it was then that I realized that this would be the last event I would participate in during my fieldwork.

Every last Friday of the month, the Bürgerhaus Kalk organizes a canteen dinner in the backyard. The dinner usually consists of a three-course menu that is prepared by different groups, such as citizen initiatives, associations, community centers, and religious groups who are invited by the Bürgerhaus. These groups prepare the entire three-course menu for the attendees and use this as an opportunity to present their work or activities. On this Friday the menu was supposed to be prepared by the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg. It was a good occasion for me to offer my support and thanks to the citizen initiative since I was able to accompany them during the previous three months. One week before, Boris, the speaker of the BI Kalkberg, sent his idea for the menu via email to all members. I was impressed by Boris’s creativity and kind of had to smirk going through the menu. This menu contained a good mixture of humour, political spirit, and good taste. First, we would prepare a so-called fresh mountain salad with pomegranate; the main course was smashed potato decorated as a mountain with champignon-salvia crème on top and a piece of cheese, and the dessert was ordered from the Syrian Bakery down the street—a tiny, sweet, round pastry with pistachio. It was something that resonated with my impression of Boris. One person gave feedback to us when I handed over the food saying, “I see, the tiny little cheese on top shall represent the helicopter station, and the smashed potato served in a mountain form, which now melts, presents the wobbly Kalkberg.” I nodded and the person asked me, “Who’s the brain behind this?” I pointed towards Boris saying, “He is.” I added that the champignon-salvia crème would be the removed material, upon instructions from the municipal administration.

Indeed, the whole theme of the menu was dedicated to the Kalkberg hill, placed between the boroughs of Kalk, Buchforst, and Mülheim in the city of Cologne. The Kalkberg was not only a connecting point between the boroughs but also between citizen initiatives in Kalk. And that was one of the reasons why we were invited on this day to the Hofkantine at the Bürgerhaus Kalk to connect with the residents through food. A few of us joined Boris to

prepare the meal that afternoon and decorated the tiny stage with maps of the Kalkberg area. The maps provided an idea about the actual size of the area in order for residents could have an idea of the Kalkberg area. In addition, Boris was always interested in collecting residents' ideas and visions for the Kalkberg and hoped by looking at the map, people would bring them up. The more people that became interested, the more pressure for opening the area to the public could be increased.

I really enjoyed the concept of the Hofkantine because it supported the idea of social eating. Looking back on the previous three months and thinking about my research intention—which has slightly changed—since entering fieldwork, I realized, as with all of the other events I had attended, that mainly white people attended the community meals.

The first time I visited the Hofkantine, two weeks prior, I met two social workers on my way to the toilet. We engaged with each other, and they introduced themselves to me. They both were born in and residents of Kalk, non-white, and we talked briefly about their perception of the Hofkantine and Kalk in general. I also introduced my research question to them and asked if they could imagine taking part in it. When we touched on Kalk's population composition, one of the social workers said to me, "Look around, who is here!" I understood the underlying meaning which was more like, "See who is not here," and knew immediately that he was referring to the presence of the white middle-class participants at this event. Indeed, when I enter a space, I do my usual screening, which is to me as a non-white person mostly motivated by anxiety. By checking out the space, I try to understand the dynamics in it in order to get a sense of the space. It is also to figure out how I would be perceived in that space. Are more people like me present or not? If not, the chance that I attract attention is much higher, and thus also my experience of facing microaggressions. However, at the Hofkantine, I quickly recognized these two non-white social workers followed by a tiny group of non-white young people. The one who was talking more than the other told me about changes in Kalk over the last few years, saying, "In the past, there was more social contact between neighbors; this is different now." They asked me if I was from Kalk, and I had to admit that I am not, neither born in Kalk nor raised here. I was living on the other side of the Rhine, a fact that led to my humility while conducting my research and especially when approaching non-white "Kalker" (residents of Kalk). The week before when I joined a guided tour about the history of Kalk, it was mentioned that Kalk was populated by mainly working-class people with different backgrounds during the last decades, but nowadays gentrification processes had taken place in Kalk. It is common in Cologne to make this comparison between the "left side of the Rhine"

and the “right side of the Rhine,” where Kalk is located; some might call the left side the right side to live since the wealthier population lives there. But Kalk has always been a historically important borough for Cologne due to its chemical industry. Although I invited the two social workers to become part of my research and left my contact with them, they did not reach out to me after our conversation.

Later, I had a conversation with a person who had just lived in Kalk for a few years. The person, white, complained to me about the rubbish on the streets, a problem that has been mentioned by others, mainly white people, to me. When we entered a debate about social interactions in Kalk, the person said, “It is like the neighbors do not want to talk to me when I say a friendly ‘hello’ to them. Do they not know kindness?” It was interesting to listen to the different voices and how different perspectives carry their own truth. Sometimes these truths are so opposed to each other, but usually, aspects of this truth overlap because one thing affects the other; our social living is intertwined as the social living of these citizen initiatives in Kalk is. Sometimes they do operate separately on their own behalf, but still, they are interconnected with each other. My journey involved me in the investigation of this interconnection. I describe it as finding my way through a social rhizome.

On my last event of this journey, I was invited together with the members of the BI Kalkberg by the Hofkantine to make our intentions known to the people by taking food as a communication tool, which would certainly not only affect the mind but also the body. Therefore, the menu was dedicated to the Kalkberg, the hill the citizen initiative is fighting for. The visitors stood in a row and together with Maria, Boris, and other members we gave the meal to the people, which they paid for through free-will donations. It was joyful to prepare the meal together. As we stood there united, I finally felt like I was part of the initiative. Moreover, raising awareness about the Kalkberg and the purpose of the BI Kalkberg gave me the feeling of being a supportive member. I understood for myself that participating means having interactions with others at the activities of the citizen initiative like this dinner, the picnic and demonstration of the previous week, and the gatherings. The conversations and engagement with members shaped my own experience of participation, and thus I became also my own subject of study for this thesis.

The week before, I was complaining on television about the Kalkberg situation and advocated for the Initiative’s call to open the area to the public when a journalist asked me about my expectations. In that moment with the journalist, I was infected by the energy of the others and stated our right to have access to the green area of Kalkberg, which is still managed

by the municipal administration and fire brigade. I was disappointed that our initial plan of taking over the Kalkberg for at least that one day did not succeed, but the possibility of coming together with the other members, fighting united for the one cause, gave meaning to my presence and thus to my participation in it.

Furthermore, during the last three months of fieldwork, I had to climb up to the Kalkberg, engage with multiple people, and create collective actions in order to become aware of what the future holds, what lies in the past, and what the present can tell me. Since I have discovered that our participation stories carry certain feelings, it is indeed through my feelings that I became aware of this world and which tell my own truth about events. This is why I decided to dedicate this thesis partly to other people's feelings, to honor them and let them tell their own truth.

In that sense, I encourage everyone, including me, to "feel your way" (Ahmed 2014).

I am immensely grateful for the exchange that I see as a gift when interlocutors shared their knowledge with me. In this sense, I want to acknowledge the entire village that it took to create a resource like this thesis.

Introduction

Is the democratic participation culture at stake in Cologne? This is been stated by a protest call from the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg located in the borough of Kalk in Cologne. From February to May 2023, I accompanied BI Kakberg who fights for its participatory rights, and the initiation of a public participation process to decide together with the municipal administration about the future of the Kalkberg area. This research study is the result of the three-month fieldwork and is about the construction and sense-making of citizenship in the context of public participation in Cologne.

Public participation invites citizens to seek direct information, express opinions, and influence decisions mainly on infrastructural project planning in residential areas. Moreover, it allows “ordinary citizens’ to create, shape and renew institutions and rule structures themselves” (Ryan 2021, 24). Since some time ago, it is promoted as a tool for fostering democratic decision-making and less conflictual social planning in urban centers. However, the strategy to collaborate with citizens from urban communities can be seen as a process where “values” are brought into the light, since evaluation and research have shown that including the public is actually “translated into a more demarcated set of participants” (Glimmerveen, Ybema, and Nies 2022, 544). In that sense, it is more a question of whom local authorities want to reach through public participation and to what extent the parameters for public participation are negotiable by communities or citizens (Glimmerveen, Ybema, and Nies 2022).

This thesis addresses the research question of:

How inclusion and exclusion are re-produced in the construction of citizenship in municipality-led citizen participation?

I answer this research question as a dilemma of representation, social identity, and its affective implication on the formation of citizen initiatives. This links to the debate between policy-makers and practitioners about reaching a broader range of citizens, especially those who are “more educationally disadvantaged, and residents of socially neglected boroughs” (Schäfer 2019). My interest lies in how these inclusionary efforts are expressed and implemented by public entities in order to reach those they have not reached yet. Throughout my fieldwork, it turned out that the negotiation between the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration is also a fight over control and gaining empowerment over one’s own

surroundings. But public participation creates also an arena where the concept of citizenship becomes contested by the different social actors.

The construction of citizenship defines who has participatory rights and who does not and is interlocked with these values from communities and citizens that I examine in this ethnographic analysis. But how is citizenship contested and negotiated on the ground? Investigating citizenship provides an understanding not only of whom is included but also of marginalization executed by the state's policies and citizens themselves (Field 2000, 79).

One of the mentioned parameters is language, which I address as a resource unequally accessed by the population. My anthropological contribution lies in linking the study of political participation in anthropology to the anthropology of linguistics which dedicates its research to the contestation and negotiation of social relations through language (Ahearn 2016). Moreover, looking at language including semiotics can shed light on its significance in the construction of social identity and representation. Through this, I show that language has implications for exclusion and inclusion in public political spaces like citizen initiatives. Furthermore, I will draw on the concept of "itinerary of silencing" where the ones who are not involved in the citizen initiative and advisory board for systematic public participation are constructed by those who are present as a mechanism re-producing exclusion (Spivak and Harasym 1990). Postcolonial scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak deliver a profound understanding of how differences and power relations are constituted through language practices interlocked with the agency of actors. This ethnographic study investigates the construction of citizenship as an issue of representation in municipality-led citizen participation based on produced racial differences.

This thesis comprises the experiences and perceptions of those who are interacting in citizen initiatives or within spaces of citizen initiatives in the borough of Kalk where citizenship develops a performative character through "affective acts" (Fortier 2016). I will draw on "affective citizenship" Fortier (2016, 3) which raises questions about "a certain politics of truth" and "how feelings are deemed to reflect or express the truth of citizenship as well as the truth of the citizen" (Fortier 2016, 3). Hereby, the anthropological contribution lies in expanding the debate about inclusion and exclusion by integrating the affective debate. The debate is shaped through the negotiation of feelings between citizens and local authorities, emerging as "affective citizenship" which enables an analysis of top-down initiatives like public participation by preserving its complexity instead of simplifying it as a one-direction process (Fortier 2016, 1). My interest lies in where these feelings lead toward, what they

unpack, and which actions they cause to dismantle positions of power constituting exclusion (Motschenbacher 2020, 2).

The research population comprises adult residents of Kalk and Humboldt/Gremberg. This includes members of the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg, employees of the cooperative office for public participation, the head of the municipal office for public participation, representatives of the advisory board for systematic public participation, and residents of Kalk who are not necessarily involved or to a lesser extent in citizen-initiative activities. With more than 39,000 inhabitants, Kalk and Humboldt/Gremberg represent the most populous boroughs in Cologne. The representativity of residents with migration backgrounds is quite high in Kalk.¹ In addition, it is a borough where social benefits and basic provisions are claimed by one-quarter of the population.²

In Chapter 1, I show the contestation of citizenship concepts and their performative character leading to the formation of social identity and social representation. Citizenship becomes contested through “acts of citizenship” (Isin 2008). I explain how white privilege is interlocked with citizen engagement in citizen initiatives to understand better whom local authorities address with public participation and lead to the construction of the good citizen. Chapter 2 discusses mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion based on social identity and interlocked with claims of representation explained by the “itinerary of silencing” and “postcolonial semiotics” (Spivak and Harasym 1990; Reyes 2021). Combining the concept of “postcolonial semiotics” with affect elicits responses to the connection between feelings, practices of citizenship, and the production of hierarchies through the manifestation of white and male privilege (Reyes 2021).

In Chapter 3, I elaborate upon “affective citizenship” which arises as a feature of the relation between the local government, in this case the municipal administration and BI Kalkberg, to provide a new perspective on how to analyse governing mechanisms based on the intention of domination of population. In this sense, the analysis of “affective citizenship” enables creating a space where the feelings of the ones who feel disempowered are considered as a “truth of citizenship and truth of citizens” and unpack established hierarchies that can be traced back to colonial social orders (Fortier 2016).

¹ Stadt Köln. “Bevölkerung Und Haushalte.” <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/artikel/64272/index.html>. Accessed May 6, 2023.

² Stadt Köln. “Bevölkerung Und Haushalte.” <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/artikel/64272/index.html>. Accessed May 6, 2023.

Throughout this thesis, I include my own feelings and experiences that I have observed while conducting participant observation. I documented my feelings as a “citizen’s truth” in which I process affect when it comes to spaces that appeared to not be open for everyone (Fortier 2016). As a non-white and queer person conducting research in the political public realm, I outline my own being “out of place” in these spaces where, according to Puwar (2004, 8), “some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically, and conceptually).”

Fieldwork Location

The Kalkberg

The Kalkberg is the study subject around which the debate about public participation between the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration revolves. The area is located between Mülheim, Kalk, and Buchforst. The historical workshop association documented the history of Kalk and offers guided tours, in which I have participated. I have learned about the history of Kalk’s population, which was essentially formed in the 1950s after the second world war when Germany faced a lack of workers for the industry in West Germany.³ The lack of workers was outbalanced through the recruitment of guest workers mainly from Turkey and Italy. Kalk’s industry was based on chemical and metal processing production. Therefore, Kalk must be seen as a former industrial area that during the 1970s turned into a residential area.⁴

The Kalkberg area emerged as a backfilling of chemical waste from the chemical fabrication of Kalk and reached its actual structure in the 1950s. Since 1973, the Kalkberg is no longer an industrial landfill. The Kalkberg underwent safety and renovation work from 1999 until 2004.⁵ Today, the Kalkberg is surrounded by greenery and residential areas. Next to the Kalkberg is a second landfill, which is referred to as the “Kleiner Kalkberg” (“tiny Kalkberg”). The difference is that the tiny Kalkberg is accessible and the bigger one, which the BI Kalkberg is trying to reclaim, is surrounded by fences and was since 2005 the object of the debate about the construction of a helicopter base for the fire brigade. The council’s decision from 2005 has

³ El Mankabady, Nader.24.08.2000.“Vom Gastarbeiter zum ausländischen Mitbürger.“ idw – Informationsdienst Wissenschaft: <https://idw-online.de/de/news23725>.Accessed May 21, 2023.

⁴ Pzkalk.23.11.2017.“Kalker Geschichte: Kalk im Aufbruch – Industrie in Kalk.“ Geschichtswerkstatt Kalk e.V.: <http://www.gw-kalk.de/kalk-im-aufbruch-industrie-in-kalk/>. Accessed May 21, 2023.

⁵ Kalkberg.org. “Geschichte des Kalkbergs.” https://kalkberg.kalkpost.de/?page_id=29.Accessed May 29, 2023.

not been realized because slippages occurred in 2014 which made the Kalkberg unusable for the helicopter station. In 2020 the municipality's council discarded the initial plan of the helicopter station and announced that there will be no helicopter station, but still, the fire brigade continues to manage the Kalkberg and block its access.⁶

Furthermore, the lime that the Kalkberg consists of is covered by a thin layer of soil. The lime contains the toxic substances of arsenic and lead, and when digging further, this could be blown by winds and is a real health threat if no other security measures are implemented. According to the fire brigade, this could allegedly be solved by watering the soil. The slippages will be tackled through earth fills as stated by a report in the local newspaper.⁷ In 2016, a huge new building was constructed for the rescue workers. The building contains conference rooms and tiny apartments. The Kölner Stadtanzeiger announced that the municipality and fire brigade have already invested more than 13.5 million euros, and in order to balance out the unstable Kalkberg, more investment would be required.⁸ The Kalkberg triggered not only a whole debate about the democratic participation culture in Cologne, but also the German Taxpayer Association argued that the expert report confirmed that the additional construction measures carry incalculable risk. Therefore, they call it a “debacle for the tax payer.”⁹ Since my research focused on inclusion and exclusion in the construction of citizenship and municipality-led public participation, I have chosen Kalk due to its diverse population structure, which I have explained in this chapter is historically shaped. The debate around the Kalkberg and its established history

Methodology

I started this research as a volunteer for the cooperative office for public participation in February 2023. Due to our collaboration, I have gained access to various people in Kalk and at the municipal administration that I would have not met without Dieter, Vanessa, and Lisa, who

⁶ Wittenberg, Katharina.17.04.2023. “Party auf dem Kalkberg – Bürgerinitiative plant Aktionstage.“ <https://so-stadt.de/so-koeln/news/party-auf-dem-kalkberg-buergerinitiative-plant-aktionstage>. Accessed May 29, 2023.

⁷ Hermans, Hans-Willi.17.06.2022. “Viel Kritik am rechtsrheinischen Städtebau“ in Kölner Stadtanzeiger, <https://www.ksta.de/koeln/kalk/seltene-aussichten-vom-kalkberg-viel-kritik-am-rechtsrheinischen-staedtebau-191323>. Accessed May 29, 2023.

⁸ Attenberger, Tim.31.05.2016 “Kölner Feuerwehr will weiter am Kalkberg bauen.“ In Kölner Stadtanzeiger. <https://www.ksta.de/koeln/kalk/hubschrauberstation-koelner-feuerwehr-will-weiter-am-kalkberg-bauen-258950>. Accessed May 29, 2023.

⁹ Bund der Steuerzahler Deutschland e.V.“Das Schwarzbuch – die Öffentliche Verschwendung 2017/18.“ https://steuerzahler.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Schwarzbücher/Schwarzbuch2017_18_2A_web.pdf. Accessed June 11, 2023.

are representing the office. My methodological approach comprises participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and recorded audio diaries. The collected data has been triangulated to capture the different dimensions of the interlocutor's experiences. The interviews have been translated from German into English.

Depending on the occasion and interlocutors, I have selected between these methods. I conducted participant observation at the gatherings of the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg that took place at the district center in Buchforst. I joined activities organized at the Bürgerhaus Kalk and the Kalkberg itself. My data also includes communication via the mailing list of the citizen initiative, allowing me to learn “the explicit and tacit aspects” of their organizational culture (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). During the three months of fieldwork, I became a weekly visitor of Kalk and participated in various events, like urban gardening, the pre-opening of a cultural backyard, the opening of an exhibition at the Integrationshaus e.V. in Kalk, a historical guided tour, and a small clean-up campaign. All of these activities were organized by other citizen initiatives or cultural associations. It allowed me to get an idea of the social organization of Kalk. More importantly, my decision about conducting informal interviews and having conversations with residents who participated in these events introduced me to their understanding of the social life in Kalk (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 2).

My role as a volunteer for the cooperative office for public participation included participating in various meetings with different social actors, such as social-space managers and employees of the municipal administration and the office for public participation, in Kalk and in the borough of Buchforst. In order to understand the role of the cooperative office for public participation within the municipal structures, I accompanied my colleague Vanessa, project manager for the cooperative office of public participation, and Dieter on various occasions, including informational events for public participation in Kalk and Porz. This revealed not only their perspective on and experience with actors involved in public participation but also their bargaining position within the organizational structure of public participation in Cologne. In that sense, it allowed me to “place my focus of study within the wider context” as Bernard and Gravlee (2015, 10) state in regard to the anthropological approach. In my analysis, I have included data from participating in meetings of the advisory board for systematic public participation at the town hall. From there, I used the snowball effect and made contact with the head of the municipal office for public participation and representatives of the advisory board (O’Reilly 2012, 44). In addition, I visited an internal consultation meeting together with the municipal office for public participation, different

social-space managers, and the department for public buildings and grounds in Kalk at the child protection agency. Ultimately, then, I did not only join activities in Kalk but rather visited spaces where different actors of public-participation structures crossed paths with each other. Nevertheless, my main approach to being in the field was based on building rapport with the citizen initiative and with my colleagues Dieter, Vanessa, and Lisa through engaging with them on a frequent basis (O'Reilly 2012).

From February until May 2023, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews with members of the citizen initiative, Dieter, Vanessa, and Lisa, the head of the municipal office for public participation, and one representative of the advisory board. All interlocutors have given their consent and, if they wish, are anonymized, but mostly I refer to them by their first name (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 215). Beyond semi-structured interviews, I applied “audio research method” in the form of recorded audio diaries with residents of Kalk, whom I was introduced to during the various activities in Kalk or whom I have known from before since I am resident in Cologne since 2012 (Kingston 2023). Six interlocutors have been reflecting on their overall participation experiences in Kalk in a couple of recorded voice messages sent via WhatsApp. I have secured these voice messages on my laptop and deleted them from the phone. My intention was to involve interlocutors in their own learning process where they make sense of their experiences and share them through voice messages (Verma 2021, 1347). They received guiding questions but were not forced to answer them, because it was more important to give them space to speak about what they personally find important, which also unpacks to some extent their “performative parts of identities” (Verma 2021, 1346). In that sense, I applied the “audio research method” as a supportive method to study to some extent the construction of being in a racialized and minoritized body, mine including and to gain a reflection on lived experiences (Kingston 2023).

The audio-recorded diaries allowed me to capture interlocutors' stories including their reflections, memories, and feelings, which I embed in the elaboration on “affective acts” (Kingston 2023; Fortier 2016). In order to make interlocutors comfortable to share insights I decided to use audio diaries via WhatsApp as a research method where the interlocutor decides how much time to spend on it, and the content in their own chosen environment. All interlocutors have given consent that their voice messages are transcribed and used in my analysis. I refer to them by their first names.

Ethics and Positionality

It was important to become mindful of my own “intersectional positionalities” when approaching the research location and population as a researcher, especially when conducting participating observation and semi-structured interviews.¹⁰ My academic status, my German citizenship, and my middle- or upper-class background are inherent to what Girish Daswani refers to as an “ideological position of Whiteness.”¹¹ However, my other background, which is Brazilian, much less privileged, and queer shape my multiple social identities. Therefore, I see myself constantly fighting and dismantling oppression and at the same time becoming aware of my own privileges, which I mindfully try to use to the benefit of the less privileged but not at their expense. This self-awareness is crucial to prevent my own reproduction of hierarchies which could cause harm to the research population. Nevertheless, I do see conducting this research as “deeply political” (Grassiani 2019, 249). Therefore, my own feelings and experiences, which inform my world view based on my performative identities, have become part of this study. The fieldwork did not prevent me from having uncomfortable experiences of racial and sexual discrimination. I have to admit it was sometimes a struggle-filled journey to embrace these identities and learn to play on them according to the situation (Grassiani 2019).

I have tried to avoid reproducing identity descriptions but do use them when interlocutors have positioned themselves clearly to me in those terms. I especially tackle the often taken-for-granted notion of “whiteness” and thereby answer to bell hooks, who called for a continuous “production of a discourse on race that interrogates whiteness” (hooks 2015).

With this in mind, I have engaged mainly with white people involved in public participation, the “middle class” that quite often has an academic background, to interrogate the dilemma of inclusion and exclusion within a white-dominated political realm. My analysis investigates to what extent the category of race determines participation possibilities and thus prevents the inclusion of a broader range of people based on racialization mechanisms (Arat-Koç 2012; Olson 2002).

¹⁰ Daswani, Girish, 18.11.2021. “The (Im)Possibility of Decolonizing Anthropology.” Everydayorientalism (blog). <https://everydayorientalism.wordpress.com/2021/11/18/the-impossibility-of-decolonizing-anthropology/>. Accessed June 6, 2023.

¹¹ Daswani, Girish. 18.11.2021. “The (Im)Possibility of Decolonizing Anthropology.” Everydayorientalism (blog). <https://everydayorientalism.wordpress.com/2021/11/18/the-impossibility-of-decolonizing-anthropology/>. Accessed June 6, 2023.

During this research study, I have followed the imperative of always getting informed consent, verbal and in written form, from all of my interlocutors. The interlocutors, especially the ones who submitted audio diaries, have been invited to a community dinner, and will be involved in a future exhibition collaboration to appreciate and respect their embodied knowledge and wisdom.

Empathy and care have always been my most important ingredients when interacting with interlocutors. Opening space for negotiating the terms for interlocutors to participate in the research project according to the Code of Ethics was the predominant condition for balancing the power relationship between the researcher and the ones being researched (Grassiani 2019, 252).

1. Citizenship and Political Participation

Chapter 1 elaborates on the contestation of the concept of citizenship. It provides an understanding of how citizenship is enacted and negotiated in public participation throughout the communication between the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration of Cologne. Furthermore, I will show in this chapter that citizenship is a performative social identity and demonstrate that citizen engagement is linked to privileges.

1.1 Different Perspectives on Citizenship

What can citizenship mean? Scholars like Aihwa Ong have emphasized the interdisciplinary approach to citizenship, which brings the challenge of bridging the different perspectives (Mindus 2009). They agree that citizenship as a concept has many facets and is contested not only as a discourse but also in its subjective meaning on a collective and individual level. Franziska Maier states in her essay “Citizenship from below” (2021, 1) that the study of citizenship has focused more on the theory or institutional concepts deriving from states and other local authorities. In that sense, the discipline of anthropology has contributed to its understanding by studying citizenship as well from a bottom-up perspective. Anthropologists have also contributed to unpacking the complexity of its meaning by showing that citizenship is constituted by social and political and cultural practices from citizens themselves (Ong et al. 1996; Maier 2021). However, the complexity of it demonstrates that citizenship is always contested depending on the position of whoever is speaking. In this chapter, I examine the

different perspectives on citizenship of interlocutors, to place them in the wider context of public participation, where these different understandings express expectations of the roles of citizens and municipal administration within public participation, resulting in misunderstandings and tensions between actors.

For the last weeks in March and April 2023, I mainly followed Dieter, the head of the office and long-term, experienced specialist in municipality-led public participation, to join meetings and promotional events about public participation with the municipal office for public participation, the advisory board for systematic public participation, and the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg. It was not that easy to follow Dieter because he seems to be an in-demand person due to his experience and knowledge of political networks in Cologne. He rarely sits at the desk at the office located at the Agency for Volunteers of Cologne and is instead more often found on the street and on his way to meet people. When I would meet Dieter, it would always be in different locations and for different occasions, which also represents to me the complex dynamic within political engagement in urban boroughs like Kalk. There is no one particular place where public participation occurs, there is no singular actor who pulls the strings, and there is especially no singular group that can represent all voices of the residents as the residents do not possess a homogenous identity.

In the landscape of public participation, there are organized political actors who gather themselves in “Bürgerinitiativen” (“citizen initiatives”). Dieter advises them in processing their concerns and demands in ways that fit the bureaucratic criteria for official applications of public participation to be submitted to the municipal administration. Sometimes he takes over the mediator role between the administration and citizen initiative during their official encounters. Moreover, as head of the cooperative office for public participation, which is an external service provider to the municipal administration, he might be able to collect concerns and forward them to the responsible decision-makers in official council meetings, in which he is allowed to participate. Within the administration structures, he co-facilitates the official meetings of the advisory board of systematic public participation. In this sense, he is also able to shape the agenda settings of these meetings where public participation processes are discussed. Dieter’s position requires communication with the administration, citizens, citizen initiatives, social-space managers, and political actors like the representatives of the advisory board. He needs a profound understanding of which role to play when and where. Dieter acquired these skills over many years. As he said to me, his own story or perspective as a citizen of Cologne informs his actions. During our interview, which we did online because, as

mentioned, Dieter is rarely at the office, he gave me insight into his experience and background in public participation in Cologne. Dieter highlighted his experience, which would be difficult for a successor to replace, and called the employees of the municipal administration “beginners.”

Dieter: [...] Well, I’m familiar with the perspective of citizen initiatives. I know the whole spectrum of action, including civil disobedience, I have my own criminal record for civil disobedience action, so I can also draw on a pool of resources, which allows me to speak about it. It’s not just something that’s learned by reading, this makes an enormous difference. (Interview, 21 March 2023)

Dieter’s experience was based on providing consultancy services for political and public institutions for the last 30 years as a self-employed individual in implementing various projects of citizen engagement. For Dieter, it was obvious that his lived experience, including actions as a citizen and advisor, allowed him to understand the perspective of citizen initiatives and formed his knowledge, something that Muehlebach (2018, 355) describes in the context of defining citizenship, that by doing it shapes, “the memory of embodied democratic action that can hardly be stolen.” For Dieter, citizenship was clearly intertwined with local actions, which sometimes takes the form of resistance towards the authority, as he mentioned his civil obedience shaped his local knowledge about how and where to enact citizenship over time.

Other interlocutors have also referred to their double roles merging with inhabiting different perspectives, including those of citizens. Next to Dieter, Lisa, who is the project manager at the cooperative office for public participation and works together with Dieter, underlined the importance of belonging to the urban society when push comes to shove. Her understanding of citizenship comprises belonging and membership. Nevertheless, she also sees herself in between different actors, as she takes over a mediating role in her job. Like Dieter, she mentioned her own experience as a citizen gained through her engagement within cultural associations in Cologne, which brings back the enactment aspect of citizenship. In her role as a project manager, she tries to generate mutual understanding between citizen initiatives, citizens, and the administration. She stated that there is a misunderstanding of citizen initiative work on the side of the municipal administration. The head of the office for the municipal administration Katharina would probably argue against it. During our interview at the municipal office for public participation, Katharina highlighted the union of two perspectives that she joyfully applies in her job.

Katharina defined her being of a citizen by her residential status. For her, citizenship is

more a status that goes hand in hand with administrative tasks and obligations that are required as a citizen. It becomes visible that understandings and conceptualizations of citizenship differ from each other, but they are intertwined with each other. Dieter's emphasis lies with the actions he was involved in as a citizen. Lisa highlighted her belonging to the urban society which goes back as well to her background in social-cultural initiative work in Cologne, which also includes forms of enactment of citizenship. And Katharina mentioned the status of citizens, for example, defined by juridical residency. However, through her work, she engages regularly with citizens through participation forums or other participatory events, and thus interaction is inherently linked to citizenship. Hence, as determined through my conversations with them, they all associate with slightly different concepts of citizenship, and all are aware that citizenship is more than a status. Indeed, according to Isin, citizenship is constructed through practices and not only a legal status received through residency (Isin 2008). Therefore, I suggest seeing the tasks of Dieter and Lisa at the cooperative office for public participation not only in terms of advising and informing citizens and citizen initiatives about their participatory rights but also navigating and mediating between the different concepts of citizenship amongst social actors.

Nevertheless, I want to mention that the different concepts of citizenship are intertwined with each other. Citizenship as a right is interlocked with obligations, for example, undergoing registration processes for residency. Citizenship is enacted and motivated by having the right to have rights, which could be demonstrations for a right to affordable living. And through enacting citizenship rights, individuals constitute a sense of belonging to the purpose of a demonstration and the group enacting it. Looking at the complexity of citizenship shows that it is "essentially" contested through the "collective and individual situated meaning-making" (Maier 2021, 2). As I have shown the differences in sense-making of citizenship between Dieter, Lisa, and Katharina, I will elaborate in this thesis on the contestation of citizenship in practice where individual and collective sense-making of it play a crucial role in defining who is part of and who is not part of it (Maier 2021, 2-3).

In order to understand how citizenship becomes a contested concept where social identities and social representation imply power relationships as elements of political participation, I employ the anthropological approach to citizenship in which it is addressed as an identity to be performed on and enacted through "acts of citizens," including actions and practices on an individual and collective level (Isin 2008; Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000; Hildebrandt et al. 2019). Public participation refers to the participation of citizens where they

are involved in a “process of institutions, programs, and environments that affect them” (Heller 1984, 339). Usually, this includes the involvement of self-organized collectives like citizen initiatives that focus on a certain social and political issue and advocate for it to improve the situation for the group, a community, or an entire borough (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000). In that sense, the organization of the self-organized collective is based on a concept of local identity and, since it advocates for a common purpose, is intertwined with social representation. Citizen initiatives make claims to citizen rights through practices that according to Isin can be framed as “acts of citizenship” (Isin 2008). Isin argues in the book “Acts of Citizenship” that citizens constitute themselves as citizens due to their entitlement to rights, which they claim through actions (Isin 2008, 18). However, citizens’ understanding of citizenship is nevertheless influenced by produced discourses about citizenship from local authorities (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 163). This expresses itself through expectations that local authorities have of their citizens, which Katharina mentioned in regard to dealing with administrative tasks, to be understood as civic obligations (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 163; Maier 2021). The civic obligation includes devotion to “democratic institutions, or cultural and political practices” where public participation is positioned as a commitment to a democratic participation culture (Maier 2021, 3). I argue that a “plurality of concepts and discourses” on citizenship co-exist, not only on an individual and collective level but also between collectives like citizen initiatives and municipal administration within a state-centered and legal understanding and outside of it.

This complex plurality of citizenship concepts partly explains the potential for misunderstandings between the social actors involved in public participation structures. I have shown that the plurality emerges amongst the representatives of the cooperative office for public participation and the municipal office for public participation, resulting in reservations towards each other, especially coming from the colleagues that position themselves as part of the urban society. Dieter called the employees of the municipal administration “beginners” since they have no experience in acting on citizenship. And Lisa commented on the lack of understanding of citizen-initiative work on the side of the municipal administration.

The question is, can a real understanding be achieved amongst citizens and administration by integrating the plurality of concepts and discourses on citizenship? Although all confirmed they have the ability to change their perspectives and thus acquired different understandings of citizenship, nevertheless, according to Dieter and Lisa, the misunderstandings affect the payoff of public participation. And it is a legitimate question of

who is excluded from the discourses on citizenship appearing in public participation, since the overall question of policymakers is, “How to reach those who have not been reached yet?” (Schäfer 2019, 134). In this chapter, I have shown the existing different concepts of citizenship and what these comprise. In the following chapter, I elaborate on the concept of citizenship formulated by BI Kalkberg and how they negotiate it. My outline will draw on the performativity of citizenship.

1.2 The Enaction of Citizenship Through Participation

In the previous chapter, I have examined the different citizenship concepts by drawing on examples from my interviews. Interlocutors made sense of citizenship by conceptualizing citizenship as a right, a constitution of membership, and a lived experience. I suggest seeing these concepts as intertwined to understand the contestation between individuals and also between collectives (Maier 2021). However, when citizenship is practiced and theorized within public participation and thus comprises political participation, social identity and representation are crucial elements of it since the involved actors like citizen initiatives are grounded in local identities and a sense of community (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000). Considering the fact that social representation and social identities are elements of public and political participation, it becomes important to analyze its implied power relations that shape the public and political arena and define who is part of it and who is not (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000).

The analysis in this thesis addresses the power relation between the municipal administration and the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg to investigate inclusion and exclusion mechanisms reproduced by members of the BI Kalkberg. I argue, therefore, that their understanding of citizenship is influenced by the concept of citizenship of the municipal administration, which still dictates the framework of public participation processes and thus “has a performative effect on citizens’ initiatives” which forces citizen initiatives to act strategically and anticipate expectations put upon them inherent to the discourses (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 163). Hence, it can be said that citizens’ sense-making of citizenship differs, and the concepts of citizenship are contested not only between the local authority and citizens but, as I have shown above, also amongst individuals or citizens themselves. However, civic obligations are an important aspect of citizenship concepts, which I came across when interviewing the municipal administration as well as members of the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg. Maier states that civic obligation is a commitment to “democratic

institutions”; in the case of BI Kalkberg, I discovered that this is built on a commitment to fight for the democratic participation culture mentioned by Boris a couple of times in terms of “we are taking responsibility” or stated in an open letter of BI Kalkberg regarding how the debacle of not opening the Kalkberg and the misinformation coming from the municipal administration “threatens the participation culture in Cologne” (Maier 2021, 3).¹²

Since scholars of anthropology such as Engin Isin and Aihwa Ong have argued that citizenship is a contested concept, I demonstrate in this chapter the negotiation of citizenship and obligations linked to it between the municipal administration and BI Kalkberg. Therefore, I refer to an extract of an email sent by Boris, the speaker of the citizen initiative. This employs my insight into the social and political life of BI Kalkberg and how they make sense of “being a citizen”. By drawing on Isin’s theory about “acts of citizenship,” I examine interlocutors’ motivation to engage in this citizen initiative, which serves as mobilization for enacting citizenship (Isin 2008). I define citizen initiative as a “form of collective action” (Blok, van Buuren, and Fenger 2020, 244). In the case of BI Kalkberg, their actions are based on the motivation to “realize participatory rights” and assert influence on participation possibilities in the debate around the Kalkberg area, where they perceive they have no possibilities to participate in the political decision-making (Eckert 2022, 101).

From February to May 2023, I have been involved in planning processes and the realization of collective actions through which they constitute themselves as citizens. These “acts of citizenship” form the political being of persons through which they claim rights as well as a collective (Isin 2008, 39). Ong explains in her essay “Cultural Citizenship” (1996, 738) that citizenship is on the one hand constructed by the state where individuals are seen in their function like taxpayers, consumers, or social benefits receivers, and on the other hand, individuals make claims to citizenship through “cultural practices and beliefs.” Individuals contest the state’s understanding of citizenship by negotiating the criteria of citizenship which have been defined by the state (Ong et al. 1996). Since I have shown the concept of citizenship is contested even amongst citizens themselves where I drew on the understanding of Dieter, Lisa, and Katharina, citizenship as a concept is also inhabited by collectives and thus an essential component of shaping the identity of citizen initiatives. According to Ong, the production of citizenship undergoes a dual process of “self-making and being-made” (Ong et al. 1996, 737). The email extract showcases the “self-making” aspect of the citizen initiative

¹² Kölner Freiwilligen Agentur, 28.03.2022. “Offener Brief von der BI Kalkberg.“ In Kölner Freiwilligen Agentur Newsletter <https://www.koeln-freiwillig.de/offener-brief-von-der-bi-kalkberg/>. Accessed June 22, 2023.

BI Kalkberg where they position themselves as citizens and demand obligations from the municipal administration (Ong et al. 1996).

Boris, who became the main representative of BI Kalkberg, was the first person that I met from the citizen initiative. In February, March, and April 2023, I have frequently been in touch with Boris through email, at different events in Kalk, and of course at the citizen initiative's gatherings. I recognized Boris's skills which made him a great facilitator and charismatic speaker during my participation in the citizen initiative gatherings. His ability to navigate the discussions by respecting each person's opinion and simultaneously showing curiosity towards members' backgrounds and reasons for participating in the citizen initiative, made him a trustworthy and recognized speaker in BI Kalkberg. Boris never really dominated a discussion; he would instead ask questions to clarify things and come up with solutions. I would say Boris was not someone looking for followers, rather, he was looking for opportunities to provide his service to the purpose of this citizen initiative. He always raised his voice with confidence and distinctness towards the municipal administration. I observed that Boris did not rack his brain over his formulations when confronting the municipal administration. But in the eyes of Maria, it requires courage to do so, as she commented about it to me. Courage because everyone knew that the administration language which has been described as "not tangible" and "unreasonable", can put you in the position of feeling inferior because it is not totally understood amongst those who see themselves as not belonging to the administration. It is like one of the interlocutors of the cooperative office for public participation stated "you need to know the codes." I will refer to this more in detail in chapter 2 and 3.

While Boris gained quite a large repertoire of administrative expressions over the years, his focus lay on clarifying the demands of the citizen initiative and representing those with his insistence. I see Boris as being very dedicated to civic obligations, which in his understanding means "taking responsibility" for maintaining and fighting for the democratic participation culture in Cologne. I have observed that the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg communicates and negotiates their claims with the municipal administration and enacts citizenship by sometimes taking decisions without the approval of the administration. As Ong argues, citizens negotiate their status and scope of action within (Ong et al. 1996). Their actions build on the demand of having access to the Kalkberg. The municipality has given in to the pressure and with a council's decision in 2020 decided not to build a helicopter station. But since then, the Kalkberg is still administered by the fire brigade, part of the municipal

administration structures, and the area is still closed to citizens. In October 2022, a workshop was organized and facilitated by Dieter where BI Kalkberg and the responsible person from the municipal administration and fire brigade were present. In an e-mail from Boris sent to the contact person from the municipal administration he refers to the developed agreements.

Since Boris is eager to serve the citizen initiative's purpose, he would also send the forwarded emails to the mailing list of BI Kalkberg, which I was part of. The email was sent by Boris to ask the members if he should add something. He gave me consent to use this email in my thesis and sent it after BI Kalkberg decided to organize a public picnic for residents on the Kalkberg.

- The result of the examination whether and in which frequency the Kalkberg can be made accessible regularly (whereby we had made clear that 'whether' can actually not be the question).
 - A schedule for the preparations for public participation until the start of public participation.
 - A procedural plan for the transfer of the Kalkberg from the fire department (Department I) to your department.
- We were promised this information by February 28 at the latest and have not received it (to date).
- A fourth piece of information namely the notification of a fixed date for a public event on the Kalkberg at the beginning of April, had also been promised but this has fortunately been settled in the meantime because the date of April 23 has now been fixed. Have you already been able to check in your company whether you want to and can participate in the event? (E-mail, 15 March 2023)

First, Boris made clear that they are not willing to arrange a date for a personal meeting since the last agreements had been neglected. He demanded that the administration act on their agreements by "doing homework." Then he listed what had been agreed upon together with the administration at the last meeting. He highlighted that the question of whether the Kalkberg area can be opened is not acceptable for BI Kalkberg; rather, it clarification was needed regarding the "frequency of accessibility." In the name of BI Kalkberg Boris requested a schedule for the preparations for public participation. This request represents a crucial demand in negotiating the possibility of influence of citizens in a "top-down" organized public participation process, which is usually prepared and administered by the municipal administration. BI Kalkberg aims to influence the political decisions about the future of the Kalkberg. This not only shapes the criteria of citizenship within "top-down" public participation processes in which citizens are involved after the official opening of the process. The request of already being involved in the preparation of the public participation process shows how Boris constitutes himself as a citizen according to Ong's (1996) understanding.

Ong argues that power becomes visible within the process of becoming a citizen, where it is exercised by an actor or an actor needs to submit to it (Ong et al. 1996, 738). By blocking further communication when the promises are not kept by the municipality, as referred to as “homework,” Boris executes power, since he knows the administration cannot simply end communication with them due to bad press. In addition, he announced the public picnic to increase the pressure and demonstrate their autonomy by not waiting for the municipal administration’s approval. Nevertheless, knowing that a public participation process can logistically only be initiated by the municipality since it is a “top-down” process, he can only make demands and urge the responsible persons but has to submit to their decision-making power over it.

In this conversation, Boris positions himself as an actor who formulates and represents the demands of the citizen initiative, and the organization of collective actions can be seen as part of it which are “acts of citizenship” (Isin 2008, 24). Reading about how Boris describes the communication between them and the municipality, it is important to highlight that it is perceived as a *pattern*. I elaborate upon the effect of the pattern on the formation of “affective citizenship” in Chapter 3 (Fortier 2016). Boris ends his e-mail by drawing on the impression the BI Kalkberg has of the municipal administration and how this affects them.

The reason I am writing to you so clearly is that a *pattern* is emerging for us: We hold talks, these talks result in commitments and agreements, and instead of these commitments being honored, we are only ever offered a new meeting date (and only if we put pressure on ourselves). This delays everything enormously, we never have planning security, and our confidence that something useful will be achieved in this way in the coming warm season is gone. (E-Mail, 15 March 2023)

It is the lack of planning security that affects members’ confidence and trust. Furthermore, this email and the picnic they announce can also be seen as a “need to be heard” (Isin 2008, 24).

In this paragraph, I have exhibited that to what extent citizenship is enacted is not only defined by the local authority and linked to formal rights. By approaching citizenship with an anthropological lens, it becomes visible that members of citizen initiatives constitute themselves as citizens through acts, claims, and negotiations, which gives citizenship a performative character and expands the criteria of citizenship. Hence, I argue that BI Kalkberg performs citizenship by acting on it, such as by organizing public picnics; by writing this email to make their demands explicit, they negotiate the criteria of citizenship placed by the municipal administration to expand the scope of action. In that sense citizenship is not a static concept in theory or in practice. However, the scope of action is limited due to the fact that the

municipal administration still manages the entire public participation process by coming up with certain boundaries to enact citizenship, but these boundaries are constantly pushed and thus citizenship is essentially contested. In the negotiation about citizenship, the good citizen rises, responding to the expectations and wishes of the municipal administration and at the same time claiming to represent the interest of a wider community (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). The construction of the good citizen will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.3 The Good Citizen

I have argued that citizenship is a performative identity that citizen initiatives like BI Kalkberg enact through collective actions, in order to realize participatory rights where they sense that they have lost them (Isin 2008). Therefore, BI Kalkberg claims that citizenship comes with rights within public participation through collective actions like the public picnic in order to make their demands heard by the municipal administration. Nevertheless, they see it as a civic obligation to fight for democratic decision-making, which should involve citizens, and Boris frames this happening as “taking responsibility.”

However, how the citizen initiative makes sense of citizenship within the framework of public participation is also subjected to the citizenship concept put in place by the municipal administration which dictates the degree of involvement of citizens within the public participation process. BI Kalkberg tries to negotiate their level of involvement by making demands followed by actions to increase pressure on the negotiation. Therefore, the criteria of citizenship placed by the municipal administration is not to be seen as static, but rather as being pushed by BI Kalkberg, which executes power through blocking communication and at the same time submitting to the power of the municipal administration, as they cannot simply have access to the Kalkberg area (Ong et al. 1996). I have shown that citizenship is a process in which citizens constitute themselves as citizens; but at the same time the local authority shapes this constitution process by placing restrictions on the framework of the action for citizens within public participation processes, and thus citizenship is a dual process of “self-making and being made” defined by executing and submitting power coming with control and administration mechanisms (Ong et al. 1996, 737).

In this chapter, I examine how citizenship is performed through the collective actions of BI Kalkberg, which is influenced by the understanding of a “good citizen” demonstrated by the way BI Kalkberg anticipates expectations from them and their strategic action towards these expectations (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 163).

Municipal administrations target citizens' involvement in public participation, which refers to self-organized citizens coming together in collectives and formulating their concerns and interests accordingly through the forecasted formalized procedure established by the municipality, which is executed by dialogue events like citizen forums and online participation format in Cologne. However, to become as effective as possible, BI Kalkberg organizes events like a public picnic on the Kalkberg. The organization of this public picnic was important to BI Kalkberg, in order to move strategically towards the expectations of the municipality and also become "good citizens."

During the Monday gatherings at the district center Buchforst, BI Kalkberg would usually discuss the current state of things and future actions. On Monday the 6th of March 2023, they discussed the public picnic happening on the 27th of April 2023 at the Kalkberg to increase pressure on the municipality and the fire brigade, securing the Kalkberg, since as Boris had stated in the email, they perceived the communication as aborted from the side of the municipal administration. At this gathering, Desirée, speaker of the citizen initiative "Mehr Grün in Kalk" ("More green in Kalk") was present.

The group discussed the organization of the public picnic on the Kalkberg. Not only was the public picnic a statement of their right to have access to the Kalkberg, but it should also force the municipal administration to resume communication with BI Kalkberg. By informing the press about the public picnic, public recognition would increase, and thus also the pressure on the municipal administration. One member said, "We have to increase the pressure and this is only possible if we are more people." The group decided to organize a couple of events on the Kalkberg, and Boris suggested that all four of the dates they decided on should be communicated to the administration. All of this should reinforce the demand for the unlimited opening of the Kalkberg. The discussion moved towards the political handling of the public picnic. In terms of the right of demonstration, they planned that if the fire brigade requested that the public picnic be dissolved, they could spontaneously label it as a demonstration. Marek, who mentioned his lawyer background to me during our interview, commented, "The invitation for the public picnic cannot be perceived legally as such a demonstration, and officially as political."

The public picnic was thus communicated as a "non-political" event. Through realizing the public picnic which is "seemingly non-political," it takes on a political meaning since it will increase pressure on the municipal administration to initiate the public participation processes, but beforehand, it will result in the opening of the Kalkberg area to the public, in

order for residents to spend time there (Eckert 2022, 102). Such “non-political” activities foster the collective identity of BI Kalkberg, as they represent “acts of citizenship” through which they claim their participatory rights in the future of the Kalkberg (Eckert 2022; Isin 2008).

According to van Dam, Duineveld, and During, members of citizen initiatives become “good citizens” by acting towards the expectations put upon them, which includes civic obligation (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). The “good citizen” can be described as proactive, incorporates governmental objectives in his actions, is capable of setting up a reliable organization [...] and incorporates the interests of a wider community” (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 175). The organization of the public picnic shows the proactive side of the initiative, the negotiation about the public participation process which will lead to the reutilization of the Kalkberg is the governmental objective, and the persistence and self-organization capability even with other citizen initiatives of BI Kalkberg proves it is a reliable organization. Their scope of action is limited not only by the security measures of the fire brigade which prevents accessing the Kalkberg easily. It is also the municipality that places rules on them, such as formalized procedures for the application of public participation or attending formal participation events. For BI Kalkberg, being heard means anticipating the response of the municipal administration which addresses “those initiatives, who operate in an organizational form that is familiar” with the municipal ones (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 172). In order to advocate effectively, BI Kalkberg adapts to the expectations the local authority puts on them, which includes no riot actions coming from citizen initiatives. I realized that citizen initiatives do not always act on their own, but rather, they form alliances amongst each other and pool their energies to become more effective in their claims towards the decision-making municipal departments. They share resources with each other, like for example technical equipment, but also give each other a stage during their organized activities to raise awareness for citizen initiative concerns. Therefore, it is indeed a question of to what extent the common interests overlap or are distinguished from each other. This is something that I have not investigated further, since my fieldwork period was three months and a study about various citizen initiatives would require more time. Moreover, it can be said that forming citizen initiatives is already an attempt to distinguish those who are only acting on their own behalf, by constituting themselves as “good citizens” according to the expectations of the local authority, which comes as well with the claim of representing a wider community (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 175). In the case of BI Kalkberg, they represent the “citizen of Kalk who want[s] to see the Kalkberg open to them”, as a member announced at a gathering.

This chapter has shown that BI Kalkberg's actions are shaped by the "perceived expectations" of the municipal administration and thus have an effect on how they perform their actions (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015, 174). In the following chapter, I elaborate on how political engagement in citizen initiatives is linked to privileges held by the white and middle class that dominate the political reality within public participation as a result of exclusionary effects inherent to the restrictions placed on public participation processes.

1.4 Citizen Engagement and White Privilege

The expectation towards citizens to become active in public participation under the conditions of self-organization and formulation of demands according to the wishes of the municipal administration might be an inclusionary attempt in the debate about civic integration in public policy but has "exclusionary consequences" (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 217). My insights into the landscape of citizen engagement in citizen initiatives in Kalk showed me that citizenship is also enacted outside of the provided framework of the municipal administration such as in participation forums within the context of public participation. Furthermore, in the context of public participation citizenship becomes, through the negotiations, a performance by "acts of citizenship" and rather an identity issue where the "good citizen" constitutes itself and is subjugated to its linked expectations of the local authority, resulting in citizen gathering and feeling responsible for a wider community (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020; van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). When policymakers and practitioners mention the integration of "migrant communities" within the public participation processes, it refers to a variety of people with a migration background who will become part of the groups of "good citizens" (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). But practitioners like Dieter and Lisa, and even the members of the citizen initiative like Boris, described the current situation in the landscape as "always the same suspects who fight it out." Considering that citizenship becomes rather an identity issue, my further investigation elicits responses to questions of the "participation paradox" concerned with the legitimacy of people with migration backgrounds, especially those perceived as non-white, and if it is in general questioned by those who participate and enact citizenship (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Klarenbeek and Weide 2020, 218). The "participation paradox" sees the parameters within which citizens can participate in public participation as problematic because it demands time, resources, and certain skills to do so, which is unequally distributed across citizens (Stolle and Hooghe 2011, 120).

I conducted participant observations and semi-structured interviews at activities of BI Kalkberg and other initiatives like More Green in Kalk and Agora across the borough of Kalk to first observe who participates and who does not by referring to who is present and second figure out identity aspects leading to the formation of citizen initiatives. Citizen initiatives are self-organized and based on a voluntary engagement policy. In that sense, I draw on the self-perception of the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and implications for who can participate.

Most of the people I spoke to had been involved in BI Kalkberg for the last few years. But there were members who had already become active in the debate about the Kalkberg in the 1970s according to the conversations I listened to. The semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with Marek, Tillmann, Desirée, and Maria revealed that they had already been part of another citizen initiative in Kalk or in the neighboring quarter like the “Buchforst Mobil” (“Buchforst Mobility”) and “Tun stadt machen” (“Doing city creating”) or representative of the district council for the green party. “Buchforst Mobil” advocates for a balanced utilization of traffic areas and focusses on a more bicycle-friendly borough by investigating public decisions about new road construction.¹³ “Tun stadt machen” is interested in reviving public fallow land like the Hallen Kalk (halls of Kalk) for urban design, which should be born jointly and expand the cultural landscape of Kalk by conducting feasibility studies and organizing cultural events.¹⁴ And then there was Mehr Grün in Kalk (More Green in Kalk), for which Desirée was the speaker, which stands up for a reutilization of brownfields for the cultivation of green areas.¹⁵ Citizen initiatives build alliances to have a wider reach and defend themselves against accusations from the municipal administration that single citizen initiatives would only represent particular interests.

Nevertheless, the previous or co-existing engagement of Marek, Tillmann, Desirée, and Maria in citizen initiatives or political parties in Kalk and the neighboring borough underlines the argument that the same people engage and participate in political activities. Campbell and Jovchelovitch argue in the essay “Health, Community, and Development: Towards a Social Psychology of Participation” (2000) that studying participation requires considering the social-psychological aspects behind the formation of these communities which citizen initiatives are part of. One condition for individuals’ participation in communities is a shared identity formulated by the community itself (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000, 264). The identity is co-shaped by “acts of citizenship” which I see as “invariably bound” to knowledge about

¹³ Buchforst Mobil. “Wer wir sind“. <https://www.buchforst-mobil.de>. Accessed June 11, 2023.

¹⁴ Tun Stadt Machen. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/tunstadtmachen/>. Accessed June 11, 2023.

¹⁵ Mehr Grün in Kalk. “Über uns“. <https://www.mehr-gruen-in-kalk.de/ueber-uns/>. Accessed June 11, 2023.

enacting and protesting for citizenship (Isin 2008; Fortier 2016, 3). It can be assumed that the previous and co-existing engagement of interlocutors in spaces where citizenship is performed informs their knowledge of citizens' rights and understanding of citizenship. Moreover, it proves that they have easy access to becoming engaged in political collectives.

For a newsletter article and my own study, I conducted an interview with Maria, Boris, and Jochen. I also observed how they positioned themselves and reflect their engagement within the citizen initiative, since Stevenson, Dixon, Hopkins et al. argue that the enactment of rights and its negotiation is linked to the "positioning within the social world" (Stevenson et al. 2015, 8). During our conversation, I asked them who they think is missing from the citizen initiative. While the others were still thinking, Boris was the first to answer and indicated that he knew what the question was about. He told me that the citizen initiative had previously collaborated with the Sikhs whose mosque was located right at the foot of the Kalkberg. For him, it would be positive if more people would become active for the Kalkberg, but he sees obstacles.

Boris: Here in Kalk you have to do this because they have other issues to care of, that is why you have to fight for it. It is always the same circles that fight it out and go the long haul. In my opinion, it depends on the forms of participation [...] the price you pay is disproportionate to the profit. (Interview, 6 March 2023)

Maria and Jochen agreed with him. Boris complained about the formats of participation in public participation processes, which he sees as the main reason for the exclusion of those mentioned. Nevertheless, based on the statement, Boris, Maria, Jochen, and the other interlocutors Marek and Tillmann had something in common. They all had enough time to engage in the citizen initiative plus they have experience in participating in other political activities. Campbell and Jovchelovitch state that communities are built upon similar "conditions and constraints of access" to resources including materially and symbolically (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000, 264). Boris described the participation formats as language-heavy and with a low level of excitement. Maria grumbled about the language of administration which is not comprehensible, not concrete, and non-binding. Tillmann called it the "German of the bureaucrats" and defined it as a barrier, and for him personally not comprehensive and long-winded. Therefore, he was not interested in participating anymore in formal participation events of the municipal administration, but he is still active in his own citizen initiative and in BI Kalkberg. I remembered visiting one of the informational and promotional events of the cooperative office for public participation at the district center in

Porz. I was struck by the bureaucratic organization regarding the online complaint service for citizens which would be considered as topics for the advisory board of systematic public participation. Lisa from the cooperative office for public participation stated in our conversation that the language would sometimes go beyond her scope of understanding. Based on the interlocutors' statements, in order to deal effectively with the municipal administration, a certain understanding of the language of administration is required. Due to their previous political experience and their naturalization in Germany, they all had to a certain extent language skills that allowed them to follow the political debate between them and the municipal administration. Based on their awareness of their own resources, I argue that gathering in self-organized citizen initiatives is not simply given, rather it depends on one's capacity to have time and the ability to acquire a good understanding of the German language and the language of administration.

When I arranged an interview with Marek at the Café Villa Kalka next to the socio-cultural center Bürgerhaus Kalk, Marek commented on his self-position, similar to Boris's positioning, when he stated who is not participating in BI Kalkberg. Marek suggested the Café Villa Kalka, which is a common spot for the gentrifiers amongst all the other cafés, and he admitted that it is the one he most frequently visits. However, Marek described the composition of BI Kalkberg as follows:

Marek: [...] it is extremely heterogeneous. The people who are there, maybe not in terms of the population structure, but in terms of the people and their background regards history of involvement. (Interview, 5 April 2023)

And by population structure, I can confirm that BI Kalkberg consists of exclusively white members. Interestingly, this has been confirmed by Josef, who joined BI Kalkberg recently, and for the newsletter article he sent me a short email with his motivation to become engaged and his perception of BI Kalkberg. He referred to the social study of Franz Walter about the landscape of citizen protests across Germany, which stated that it is a male-dominated space with people of a relatively high education (BP Europa 2013). Josef wrote to me saying, "According to the BP study (Franz Walter, 2013), the majority of active people here are educated, white, and retired - I am not retired, the rest is probably true (... still)." Marek stated that BI Kalkberg might "not be heterogenous in terms of population structure." In my talk with Boris, Maria, and Jochen, Boris commented that the Sikhs are no longer present at BI Kalkberg, nor are any people from the Turkish community in Kalk, such as his Turkish neighbors. They agreed that participating in the citizen initiatives requires time and energy, and their access to

these spaces was invariably bound to their engagement in other political spaces allowing them to gain skills and knowledge about the political landscape in Kalk, which also facilitates their further involvement in the political negotiations between BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration. How is it that “the same suspects” always occupy the political spaces in Kalk, especially considering the fact that Kalk is the borough with the highest percentage of residents with migration backgrounds in Cologne? Also for historical reasons, as I have explained, Kalk was mainly populated by guest workers from abroad due to its chemistry industry in the 1970s.¹⁶ It has been stated as well by Dieter and Lisa that the so-called “migrant communities” are not present in citizen initiatives, and Campbell and Jovchelovitch argue that shared conditions amongst members result in the formation of communities and identity construction (Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000). This raises the question of to what extent white dominance in citizen initiative spaces is interlocked with sharing a common social identity. Is the constructed identity inherent to claims of social representation through which a shared view of the world becomes visible, where other world views linked to other social identities are simply not present, and thus negotiation between world views within the citizen initiative are not existent? What does this mean for the parameters within which “migrants” are allowed or can participate? Therefore, in Chapter 2, I unpack that the “desire of participation” of the so-called “migrant communities” underlies mechanisms of exclusion, especially within public participation, which I argue is based on the “itinerary of silencing” and “postcolonial semiotics” and thus inherently linked to a white worldview where the white person becomes the ideal figure to perform these acts on citizenship (Klarenbeek and Weide 2020; Spivak and Harasym 1990; Reyes 2021; Puwar 2004). My following analysis builds on the argument that the rules of engagement placed by the local authorities shape the process and create inequality within the debate forums, affecting the citizens who participate in those that reproduce these rules (Barnes, Newman, and Sullivan 2004, 274).

2. “We Are Open to Everyone” – The Mechanisms of Silence Suppression

In this chapter, my theoretical elaboration draws on postcolonial studies and anthropology. I will explain the impact of language policy on inclusion and exclusion within public participation processes. Moreover, by focusing on language, first I will show how exclusion is

¹⁶ Pzkalk.23.11.2017. “Kalker Geschichte: Kalk im Aufbruch – Industrie in Kalk.“ In Geschichtswerkstatt Kalk e.V.: <http://www.gw-kalk.de/kalk-im-aufbruch-industrie-in-kalk/>. Accessed June 24, 2023.

enforced through the mechanism of silencing by the concept of “itinerary of silencing” from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Spivak and Harasym 1990). In the second part of this chapter, my analysis draws on the concept of “postcolonial semiotics” by investigating semiotics and their implication on inclusion and exclusion (Reyes 2021).

2.1 Language as a Resource

Language is an important aspect for the interlocutors, which they see as a determining factor for the exclusion of citizens in formal participatory events organized by the municipality. As Boris commented, he perceives the formats as language-heavy. Others mentioned the impossibility of understanding the language of administration and thus defined it as a barrier in addition to the rules placed by the municipality for these processes. According to Fortier, language becomes, therefore, a resource that is difficult to contest and through which the local authority creates inequalities, especially for those who had “unequal conditions” to acquire these language skills (Fortier 2022, 449). And the debate about who is more excluded under unequal conditions reveals itself in the evolving discussion about how to reach those who have not yet been reached through public participation formats. Schäfer summarizes in the collective volume about “Integrated Social Planning in North-Rhine Westphalia” that specifically the unemployed, people receiving social benefits, those having language deficits, and those having lower educational backgrounds are difficult to reach with the existing formats (Schäfer 2019, 134).

Although there is public interest in including a broader range of people, at the same time the application of the language of administration and the obligation to follow bureaucratic procedures to express concerns shows how local authorities entrenched in their ways “make speaking and behaving in their ways an obligation for the public good” (Fortier 2022, 449). Using language as a resource to influence political decisions which affect the population carries a historical connotation with the governing mechanisms of *colonial regimes* (Reyes 2021; Fortier 2022). How language has become an important tool for colonizers to dominate colonized populations has been analysed by influential postcolonial scholars like Fanon and Spivak. Therefore, my analysis includes postcolonial theory, as I see that it fosters forces to unpack and dismantle power hierarchies behind language, representation, and agency based on the category of race. Language became a resource delimited by its access rules in order to create discrepancies between those who have access to it and those who have not. Warnke, Levisen, and Sippola argue that language was an important contributor to establishing hierarchies of

knowledge between those who dominate and who are dominated, which they see as a mechanism still functioning today, and thus argue that postcolonial language study should not only be studied in former colonies (Levisen and Sippola 2019, 3; Warnke 2017). Taking race as one of the most important categories produced by colonialism, postcolonial scholars argue that colonial history endures today and is responsible for the modern world's fractures politically, socially, and economically (Greedharry et al. 2023). Colonialism goes back to the 14th century when Spanish and Portuguese sailors were sent from their royal houses to conquer the "Amerindian people," to kill and exploit them as labor for the exportation of resources (Ferdinand 2022, 26). Later the transatlantic slave trade was established in order to maintain the supply of natural resources which required more labour, coming from the African continent and forced to serve as slaves on the Latin American continent, and thus created a "double fracture" that "saw humans and non-humans confused as resources feeding the same colonial project, the same conception of the Earth and the world" (Ferdinand 2022, 26). As legitimacy for slavery, humans from the African and Latin American continents were racialized and became indispensable to maintain the colonial project, which as a by-product created social hierarchies in which Western white people dominated the racialized population by applying mechanisms of exclusion to economic, social, and political goods in material and symbolic form. Therefore, scholars like Ferdinand argue that the underrepresentation in the public realm of racialized people in the West goes back to its historical line, where it has been ensured that they have always been excluded from it, and continue being dominated by "White and educated men with middle-class backgrounds" (Ferdinand 2022, 4). This circles back to public participation. Walter studied the population structure of the political landscape of citizens in Germany and concluded in 2013 that it is predominantly occupied by white, educated man (BP Europa 2013) This is also the case for BI Kalkberg, as interlocutors have stated the absence of racialized people. Moreover, this includes the public entities like the advisory board for systemic public participation and the municipal office for public participation, where at least white women hold positions, but the underrepresentation of racialized people still marks its traces to the colonial legacies. Access to the resource of the German language and the language of administration becomes a crucial condition for enacting citizenship and confronting the municipal administration. Fanon argues that domination through language is linked to colonialism, where the culture of colonizers becomes manifested through the use of the colonial language (Fanon, Philcox, and Appiah 2008). Moreover, language becomes the tool for formulating needs and interests within public participation and in citizen initiatives. Since it is a white-dominated space, my investigation comprises to what extent "social interests are

inscribed” leading to the undesirability of participation of racialized people since this has the potential to tackle the hegemonic struggle between interests (Warnke 2017; Klarenbeek and Weide 2020)

The concept of representation is a crucial element of the negotiation between actors within public participation, since citizen initiatives claim to represent the interest of a wider community (Barnes, Newman, and Sullivan 2004, 272). In this chapter, I elaborate upon the dilemma of representation, as Barnes argues that it depends on self-positioning and identity and thus evolves around the discussion of “legitimate representation” influenced by exclusive discourses (Barnes, Newman, and Sullivan 2004, 274; Glimmerveen, Ybema, and Nies 2022). According to Barnes et al., in the context of public participation, agency is realized in the process of articulation through representation; thus they argue that public participation processes are “constitutive,” which means that notions of communities, or citizenship based on identity, is a social construction (Barnes, Newman, and Sullivan 2004, 273). I interpret social construction as referring to who is seen as being legitimate while acting on citizenship within citizen initiatives and political activities. Therefore, Glimmerveen, Ybema, and Nies call for studying the micropolitics through which these discourses become visible. I will show that the discourse about the “others” who are not present is constructed by those who are involved, which the postcolonial scholar Spivak framed as the mechanism of the “itinerary of silencing” that became visible on different occasions (Spivak and Harasym 1990). And when it comes to social construction and representation of socially constructed identities it must be studied to what extent this plays on discourses of race, gender, and class. I have chosen to focus my work on race.

2.2 Itinerary of Silencing and Postcolonial Semiotics

My analysis points out that the category of language, more specifically the language of administration, is tied to “whiteness and middle-classness” (Fortier 2022, 450). Since my investigation mainly involved a white privileged population as the research population, I argue that “Whiteness” does not only comprise the category of “race” serving to distinguish phenotypes but also “culture” where certain activities or activity fields are linked to “Whiteness” (Arat-Koç 2012, 60). It expresses itself through the perceived “natural” belonging of the white bodies within these activities fields (Puwar 2004). I elicit responses to the manifestation of Whiteness within public participation, where the white body is perceived as

the norm to execute political activities, resulting in the exclusion of racialized people within political spaces like citizen initiatives (Arat-Koç 2012; Puwar 2004).

Therefore, I see an interrelation between exclusionary micropolitics within the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and the implied rules of speaking as features of the formalized public participation that the citizen initiative has to anticipate and is obliged to follow in order to enforce their interests towards the municipal administration. Therefore, the language requirements are combined with logics of colonial governing mechanisms (Fortier 2022, 447).

I elaborate on micropolitics within the citizen initiative, where individuals claim to “act for the public” because representation is inherent to public participation as part of the negotiations between social actors. It shows the unequal abilities of individual actors to shape the characteristics of who is a legitimate representation (Glimmerveen, Ybema, and Nies 2022, 546; Barnes, Newman, and Sullivan 2004). These unequal abilities are fostered by the “itinerary of silencing” from those who speak for the ones who are not present (Spivak and Harasym 1990). I argue that the semiotics are based on a construction of racial differences, and thus linked to the maintenance of a colonial social order (Reyes 2021).

Itinerary of Silencing

Spivak writes in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) how the agency of the “others” who are not included in the current discourse about the representation of the “others,” which she defines as “subalterns,” do not appear as speaking subjects in the British discourse as well as in the Indian nationalist discourse. In her essay, she refers to “the subalterns” as the Indian agrarian women who are always subjected to the homogenous description of those shaping the discourse and thereby limiting space for self-definition or self-description (Spivak 1988). Therefore, Spivak suggests listening to the description of the excluded ones by those who shape the current discourse in order to figure out if there is a real interest in including them by letting them speak for themselves (Spivak 1988). In her final argumentation, she states that the legitimacy of the representation should not be dependent upon their ability to speak for themselves because they do not have the ability to do so. Due to the mechanisms, which she calls the “itinerary of silencing,” the attempt to let them speak for themselves becomes ineffective by positioning the dominant few as representatives for all excluded ones (Spivak and Harasym 1990, 31). She criticizes the homogenization of the “others” inherent to representative models of the “others” based on their prescriptive identities. As long as they are not seen as essentially heterogeneous, which requires an engagement with

the heterogenous voices of the “others,” the ability to speak for themselves just does not exist. She concludes that when the speakers who create the current discourse about “the others” claim they want to listen to the “others,” and they make space in order for the “others” to represent themselves but do not consider the heterogeneity of those, a self-centered interest is supported and thus the hierarchies are maintained (Spivak and Harasym 1990; Biskamp 2021, 126-127).

The discussion about legitimate representatives in public participation was expressed to me by the colleagues Dieter and Lisa and Cristof from the advisory board of systematic public participation. The advisory board of systematic public participation is a public working body consisting of the municipal administration, the cooperative office for public participation, and representatives of political and civil society organizations, plus a few civilians, as Dieter explained to me. The task of this public working body is to advise the municipal administration about political participation and develop it further in Cologne.¹⁷

I visited Cristof in his office, and we sat together with a cup of tea and coffee. Cristof is a specialist in the engagement of seniors at the welfare association “Paritätischen Köln.” He positioned himself to me as “white, German, and socialized predominantly as catholic.” I reached out to him because in all of the meetings in which I have participated, he appeared to me to be the most approachable one. More than 30 organizations across Cologne are represented in the welfare association, and Cristof is in contact with all of them. In that sense, our conversation evolved naturally regarding the concept of representation and Cristof’s perspective on it. My interest lay in the institutional approach to making public participation accessible to a broader range of citizens. Cristof said to me in our conversation about including especially people with migration backgrounds into public participation, “It is not only about having some piece of the cake it is also a question of which kind of cake we wanna bake.” He added that the task of the advisory board would lie in figuring out participatory formats embedded within the process, in which a broader range of citizens can participate.

However, he already sees the composition of the advisory board as problematic since only one person is representing the department for integration and diversity and thus the whole “migrant community”. Cristof complained about the limited understanding of others within the advisory board regarding the lack of representation. He said, “I am aware that my perception and horizon is limited since I am representing seniors,” and linked it to his self-positioning but expressed frustration that he seems to be the only person realizing the problem with the

¹⁷Stadt Köln. <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/politik-und-verwaltung/ausschuesse-und-gremien/stadtgesellschaftliches-beratungsgremium-oeffentlichkeitsbeteiligung>, Accessed June 16, 2023.

composition of the advisory board and municipal administration. Taking Spivak as a reference, it is indeed structurally a challenge to produce a representation of “migrant communities” which is not based on a reduction concept and where they are not subjected to becoming racialized through a white gaze (Biskamp 2021, 134). By racialization, I mean that non-racialized bodies, white people, represented through the members of the advisory board, decide who is suitable to occupy this privileged position in the advisory board inevitably based on their imagination of the political space following a “race logic” (Arat-Koç 2012). This “race logic” sees race differences as historically constructed through colonialism where exclusion and inclusion were interlocked with the power of dominance of white people over racialized people to exclude them from the political space and thus political positions holding power of decisions affecting them. In that sense, racialized people are not part of the imagination of political spaces, since they have historically always been excluded and still are underrepresented there (Arat-Koç 2012; Ferdinand 2022; Puwar 2004). According to Puwar, the historical construction leads to the general perception of the excluded ones as “out of place” and creates a marker between those who “naturally” belong to the space, which would be in this case a white body, and those who do not, meaning a non-white person (Puwar 2004, 8).

Cristof explained to me that the reason for not opening the advisory board to more and a broader range of people was based on the argument of “but where to draw the line,” which in his opinion was the argument of the many “old white men” who were not able to excel themselves for once. He complained about the administration which is always trying to “minimize things.” The preference for minimizing goes hand in hand with keeping the circle small, which became visible when he suggested bringing in representatives of the working groups “lesbians and gays,” “queers,” “disability politics,” and “seniors,” plus the council for integration. This has been contested by the argument “that double structures should be prevented” because these people were already representatives in a council. He saw it as an unreasonable argument because other representatives could be sent by the organizations.

Therefore, I can say, based on my observations, exclusionary white bodies hold representative positions within the advisory board of systematic public participation, plus leadership positions of the municipal office for public participation and the cooperative office for public participation. They determine who is considered to be appropriate in the political realm and within the formal structures of public participation. Moreover, as Puwar argues, deciding who is suitable to represent “migrant communities” by those who are marked as “out of place” always limits them to a single interest, which in the context here is speaking about the inclusion of people with a migration background (Puwar 2004, 11). My argumentation is

thus linked to Puwar's statement that race, as a category of "colonial domination" appearing in the debate of representation within public participation, is interlocked with the imagination of the ideal body of occupying a space in this political realm (Puwar 2004). The colonial social order serves as the point of departure and results in marking non-white bodies as not "naturally" belonging to spaces of public entities of public participation like the advisory board of systematic public participation (Greedharry et al. 2023; Puwar 2004). And with a colonial social order, I refer to constructed class hierarchies interlocked with race, where a dominant and ruling white upper and middle class creates "exclusive education opportunities" which the non-white lower class is excluded from (Reyes 2021, 296; Fortier 2022).

In the conversation with Cristof, he commented that public participation is heavily "elitist" targeting not only, in general, the educated middle class but rather a "specific kind" of people of the educated middle class. This underlines the results of the study that argue that the citizen-protest landscape in Germany is dominated by white and highly educated men (BP Europa 2013). This is where the cooperative office for public participation enters "the game" because Dieter explained to me that one important task is to make the "non-heard" interests "hearable," not only within the advisory board of systematic public participation but also in any public participation process. However, he mentioned to me that it is indeed far more complex to represent the heterogeneity of the "migrant communities" on the advisory board, and single people cannot do so; instead he calls for conducting more workshops focussed on the different positions and heterogeneity of the "migrant community perspectives." But therein lies the problem, as Spivak asks how they can become "hearable" if they are always referred to as "migrant communities," which mirrors the homogenization of their identities that are moreover subjected to always being constructed by those who dominate the public participation space (Spivak 1988). I have outlined in my analysis that white elites of Cologne dominate the political action landscape of public participation processes and thus have no interest in dismantling established hierarchies due to the hegemonic struggles between interests, since defending their own position is more important. As Spivak argues and I have examined in this chapter, through the "itinerary of silencing" non-white bodies are perceived as "out of place" (Puwar 2004; Spivak 1988). It is legitimate to ask, as Cristof did, "What kind of cake do we wanna bake?" One that dismantles these hierarchal structures? But if so, is there a real interest not only in making the "non-heard" "hearable" but also seeing them as legitimate "natural" bodies in the political realm (Puwar 2004)? Are they allowed to speak on any kind of issues when these dilemmas emerge? Spivak concludes that as long as these mechanisms occur, there is no interest in baking another cake but rather one that serves a self-interest (Spivak 1988).

Postcolonial Semiotics

In the previous chapter, I have shown the dilemma of representation which is embedded within the structures of public participation. More specifically, my analysis takes the category of race as a crucial one, which is inherently linked to a colonial system since this category is a product of it (Greedharry et al. 2023). Furthermore, I explained that the requirement of speaking the language of the administration to effectively enact citizenship within public participation, where the interests of citizens are being heard and considered by the municipal administration, unpacks the weight on “language policy” as a “mode of subordination,” which has been practiced by many former colonial regimes (Errington 2001, 34; Fortier 2022, 448). Hence, colonial social orders reflect themselves in the imagination of to whom “naturally” political spaces belong and to whom they do not, which have been historically constructed. I argue, that looking closer at the construction of specific language practices within political spaces like public participation is interlocked with racialization and classification. Seeing language as a “civic resource” acquired by white bodies becomes at the same time the perceived ideal to enact citizenship (Fortier 2022, 450; Puwar 2004). I have not only observed an “itinerary of silencing” applied as a mechanism at the advisory board through which public entities reproduce exclusionary effects and, based on Spivak’s argumentation, do not lead to a dismantling of the white dominance in this space, but also at the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg.

In my conversations with interlocutors in which I asked them who they would miss here, it revealed not only who was perceived to be present and who was not, but also whether the non-present were homogenized through prescriptive identities from the members of the citizen initiative. But here, my analysis digs into the “policy of language” as a requirement of enacting a citizen within the citizen initiative space, where I draw on semiotics, where certain ways of speaking and behaving are seen as appropriate, which are based on the category placed from the municipal administration (Mazrui 1993, 353). When Boris stated who he would miss in BI Kalkberg, Lothar commented, “But they do not know how to articulate themselves.” This shows that the representation within the citizen initiative by non-white residents is subjected to perception as a homogenous group, where the ones who are not involved are always constructed by the ones who are involved and marks racialized and classified bodies as “outsiders” and the white bodies as “insiders” (Puwar 2004, 8). Saying “they do not have the ability to articulate themselves” shows that belonging to the citizen-initiative space comes with certain requirements, in that case speaking and understanding the language of administration without respecting the unequal conditions in access to this language where the racialized and

classified body is perceived as lacking this skill and therefore an unsuitable member of the citizen initiative (Puwar 2004, 21; Spivak 1988). I remember when I talked to Tillmann about representation within his citizen initiative he said, “Everyone can come. And therefore, everyone is there, at least those who want it.” But as I have argued, belonging to these spaces comes with requirements, and what if these requirements are not matched? Can everyone come and participate in the citizen initiative who wants to, even without matching the requirement of language? And here I want to include not only speaking but also behaving in a certain way.

BI Kalkberg has been described as white-dominated, and proportionally more elder males participate in the gatherings. Therefore, my argumentation draws on the perception of the space from Vanessa, who replaced Lisa for three months at the cooperative office for public participation. Vanessa positioned herself as a white woman, not coming from the middle class, with an academic background. Currently, she is doing her master’s at the catholic university in Cologne and has participated in a research project about public participation in Kalk, where she investigated the political participation of different interest groups in the field of social work. Nevertheless, her perceptions of how to behave in these spaces as a minority, since it is a male-dominated space, are as follows:

Vanessa: I need to pay attention to not say something wrong. To not appear as not well enough informed. So in this context, I did not have anything to say, but I think it is often a specific atmosphere that let me feel like this [...] So I do not come in and feel directly at ease so that I can open myself to them. (Interview, 15 March 2023)

Vanessa elaborated on her experience and added that as well at the advisory board for systematic public participation and the citizen initiative, she felt she would be judged for her input, which comes with a certain pressure and increasing insecurity. She sees that spaces come with rules, and many of these rules are not articulated. She complained about the preferences of occupiers of these spaces to always position themselves instead of listening to each other. Speaking is more important than listening. Vanessa compared the meetings of the advisory board for systematic public participation with those of the citizen initiative. She described the advisory board meeting as a “difficult atmosphere” with “clear structures following an internal system and logic” which needs to be known in order to participate. Vanessa said, “I need to know when to smile and when to grab a glass of water”. These sometimes unarticulated structures would not allow her to feel “comfortable” in those spaces, which I see as a way of behaving in those spaces. However, when I asked her if this was also the case in BI Kalkberg, she made the link to the perceived importance of self-positioning one’s own interest, which

reflected her impression of the gathering at BI Kalkberg. She concluded as well at BI Kalkberg that she did not feel “comfortable” expressing herself freely, since there exists fear of being judged over what is said, also due to the underrepresentation of different people with different backgrounds in the citizen initiative, as she sees it as a male-dominated and less-diverse space. The reason for the underrepresentation is that people with knowledge about political activities and citizens’ rights dominate citizen initiative spaces, which I have argued are invariably bound to access resources like language and the condition of time. She added that she can imagine that this way of claiming spaces within the citizen initiative can intimidate others.

Flavia is one of the interlocutors I met during an urban gardening event organized by the citizen initiative “Mehr Grün in Kalk.” Flavia participated in the audio diaries and beautifully shared her experiences about events organized by citizen initiatives in Kalk. Flavia’s mother tongue is not German, and I remember she described her experience with an event of a citizen initiative in Kalk as intimidating because she was “afraid” to ask if they could repeat what they said when she could not understand something. She described it as a “process of becoming part” of the “community” and it now feels “more right” to be there. Gabi, who participated in the audio diaries, and like Flavia is a resident of Kalk and not a native speaker of German, positioned herself as a “foreigner” and described her experience at a gardening event where she felt “not welcome” since entry conditions are difficult. Gabi sees every group as kind of a closed one, and when a person wants to enter, they need someone who supports them in doing so. However, Sid, also not a native speaker of German, black, and has come in touch with citizen initiative activities only through his friend Flavia, shared with me his comfortableness when interacting with mainly “older white German people” even though he spoke “broken German.” But he argued that he was only driven to join these activities through his friend Flavia; otherwise, he would have not been there. Even though Sid expressed his comfortableness, his expectation was a different one, as he stated his surprise about the friendliness because he expected that due to his German language skills they would react differently. It shows that the entry barriers to citizen initiative activities have mainly been connected to the category of language, which when interlocutors are perceived as not matching the requirement of language creates feelings of insecurity. Another category that has been mentioned was the atmosphere, which was “unwelcoming” or not allowing to “open yourself up,” making interlocutors hesitant to move freely in those spaces. Reyes explains in her essay “Postcolonial semiotics” that language as a policy, including ways of speaking and behaving that serve as a premise for the social organization at spaces, demonstrates how “local elites” benefit from the exclusivity of having access to this language (Reyes 2021, 296). The elite is

defined as the small group that “claims and/ or is accorded power, prestige, or command over others” coming with a socially constructed status that is established through criteria, which are recognized not only by the elites but also by the ones not considered part of the elite (Reyes 2021, 301; Salverda and Abbink 2013). Linking the concept of the elite to the dominance of white males within the public realm like citizen initiative spaces shows a colonial endurance in their social organization, where non-white but also female bodies feel more “out of place” as they do not fulfil the not articulated rules which represent the speakers’ attributes, who is in a dominant position and which is here male and white (Reyes 2021, 295; Puwar 2004).

I argue that the reproduced criteria for becoming a legitimate frequent member of the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg comprises an understanding of the language of administration, usually accessible to highly educated white middle-class citizens, and benefits those who are already participating. Language consists of the articulated aspects as well as the unarticulated aspects, which include ways of behaving. This expresses itself through the symbolic meaning of language linked to the speaker’s attributes, which would be here white and male, that leave an impression on interlocutors (Reyes 2021; Ahmed 2004). For example, I have Afro hair which partly marks my black identity, and when I know I will enter a predominantly white space, I do not wear natural Afro hairstyles, I would rather tie my hair. This prevents me from comments about my hair, which make me feel either “exotic” or “out of place” (Puwar 2004). Moreover, through my natural hair I am aware of “being racially marked” by white people which makes them the invisible norm since they do not receive the same comments about their hairstyle (Puwar 2004, 11). As Roys argues, covering black hair was and is until today an “assimilation to white culture” (Roy 2019, 2). According to Puwar, “being racially unmarked” is the main condition to be perceived as the norm, and argues is the result of colonialism which produced racial differences in order to establish hierarchies (Puwar 2004, 11). From my side, it is an attempt to become an “insider” in these spaces, where racialized people have always been marked as “outsiders” and left with this impression on them (Puwar 2004). And by impression, I refer to Ahmed who described in her essay “Collective Feelings Or, the Impressions Left by Others” (2004, 33) the perception of the presence of others is linked to experiences of the past that we attribute to them and which produce uncomfortable feelings. She points out that these feelings are historically created through the association with past experiences, and thus, do not appear as new feelings but rather as an interpretation of the past influencing the present moment (Ahmed 2004, 39). It explains that white women like Vanessa or Flavia do not have attributes of white men and feel insecure in spaces, where white men dominate and who represent the norm in public realms. In the case of Flavia, she is additionally

not a native speaker of German which increased her feeling of insecurity. This has been expressed by the fear of being judged for what is said, and therefore, the way of speaking and behaving of white men are socially recognized within the citizen initiative (Reyes 2021; Ahmed 2004). Furthermore, Ahmed argues that forms of discrimination are becoming visible within these “impressions we have of others, and the impressions left by others are shaped by histories that stick” (2004, 39). In that sense, Gabi and Sid both position themselves as foreigners and non-white, not native speakers of German, and in the case of Gabi, she was left with the impression of being “no welcome” and in the case of Sid, “welcome.” He also had the impression that white German people would expect him to fluently speak German. Even though both had different experiences, the impression they had was connected to past experiences associated with white German people. Therefore, I argue that language comprises ways of speaking and behaving that are perceived by others. This can be used as an exclusionary mechanism, as I have shown, that “postcolonial semiotics” serve to constitute social status linked to white men’s attributes within the citizen-initiative spaces (Reyes 2021). Since representation is an essential aspect of the negotiation position of citizen initiatives, it appears that racialized bodies in BI Kalkberg have been described as a homogenous group and that “they cannot articulate themselves,” which is an active silence mechanism, according to Spivak (Biskamp 2021; Spivak and Harasym 1990). This ensures that the predominant perspectives are not tackled and prevents the inclusion of non-white perspectives within that space. I suggest that if there is an interest in including others in the citizen-initiative space, but also within the formalized public participation process, there is a need to listen to how especially minorities feel within these spaces, to shed light on the prevailing not articulated rules that support the dominance of social hierarchies and thus the perspectives of the dominant group, which would here be the one of white men. In this chapter, I elicit responses to how the exclusion of racialized people in the citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and the advisory board for systematic public participation is reinforced through “itinerary of silencing” and “postcolonial semiotics”, placing ways of speaking and behaving as a requirement to participate, which reveals the heaviness of language policy within public participation structures (Spivak and Harasym 1990; Reyes 2021). Furthermore, I have shown that racialized people are excluded from the imagination of performing citizenship, which has been historically created and thus are perceived as “bodies out of place” (Puwar 2004).

3. Affective Citizenship

This chapter encompasses an elaboration on the theory of affect in Anthropology and draws on the theorization of affect in Ahmed's work "The cultural politics of emotions" (Ahmed 2014). Therefore, I lean towards Jupp's statement in her essay "Feelings of participation" that studying participation, even when invitations for participation are expressed, requires a focus on the "nature of spaces" which can be explored by paying attention to "affective aspects of experience" in order to create more welcoming spaces, which reflects itself in feelings that especially minorities have in a white and male-dominated atmosphere but also can appear in other relationships of power (Jupp 2008, 334). I will examine this in the relationship between BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration.

3.1 Affect and Participation

What Can We Learn Through the Lens of Affect?

In my next chapter, I outline the role of affect in enacting citizenship on a collective level. By drawing on the "collective nature of experience," I include the individual feelings of the members of the citizen initiative to analyse relations between citizen initiative and municipal administration but also citizen initiative members and non-members to understand to what extent individual feelings can become collective feelings (Ahmed 2014). My understanding of affect is based on Ahmed's definition: "Emotions, in other words, involve bodily processes of affecting and being affected" (2014, 208). My own experience throughout the last months and observations about the landscape of relations between the social actors lead me to the same conclusion that emotions and affect are intertwined and a result of the encounter between individuals' bodies. As my description in the previous chapter has shown, looking into feelings can provide insights into the "nature of experiences" (Jupp 2008, 334).

Affect has not only been mentioned within the debate about emotions and behavior based on emotions, but also as an approach, or a methodology, to study the political dimension of emotions. Affect reveals the question of "what emotions do politically" (Åhäll 2018, 38; Ahmed 2014). Ahmed unpacks in "The cultural politics of emotions" (2014) how feelings and emotions do not solely belong to us, but are rather an effect of encounters between bodies (Åhäll 2018). Furthermore, she argues that our relationship to these produced feelings differ from each other because we are differently affected by things (Ahmed 2014). According to Åhäll, who refers to Ahmed, those different relationships of feelings result in "different affective responses" that must consider categories like race, gender, sex, and class in the

analytical framework (Åhäll 2018, 40). At the same time, racialized, classified, and gendered bodies are confronted with “affective responses” of others (Åhäll 2018, 40). Anthropology has recognized affect as a tool to understand an integral part of human beings and their behaviour (Skoggard and Waterston 2015, 111). Furthermore, anthropologists have concluded that feelings are components of social, cultural, and political practices (Skoggard and Waterston 2015, 111). Skoggard and Waterston see the study of affect enabling an investigation about “the individual and the collective, *habitus*, and identity, emotion and relationship, consciousness and action” (Skoggard and Waterston 2015, 112). Raudaskoski and Klemmensen conclude in their essay “The Entanglements of Affect and Participation” that affect, including feelings, should be considered as individuals have felt truth through which they navigate the world and thus are inherently connected to their own “agency” (2019, 1). Our present feelings are informed by our past feelings linked to the history that sticks to the impression left by others (Ahmed 2004). Therefore, Ahmed argues that present feelings are not simply new ones or that individuals and collectives just have them; they are rather produced and can be traced back to past feelings (Ahmed 2014; 2004). Considering the fact that affect is always interlocked with experiences of participation, I agree with Fortier that any “act of citizenship” is thus an affective act, where bodies encounter and make meaning of this encounter through activities that are mobilized by past feelings and experiences which intersect with the present ones (Raudaskoski and Klemmensen 2019; Fortier 2016). In that sense, the way members of BI Kalkberg perceive and feel about the municipal administration is linked to the impression the municipal administration left, and the impression that the members have is shaped by the history and informs their present feelings (Ahmed 2004, 39). Furthermore, Ahmed argues that the impression left by others is intentional and builds upon this history (2004, 39).

On 13th of March 2023, I found myself in a situation with Dieter and the social space coordinator of Kalk North Tommi, which left me with uncomfortable feelings. The two white and older men invited me to discuss on the 13th of March 2023 a new project about the inclusion of a diverse set of residents in the dialogue with district politicians. I quickly realized that by speaking about “the migrants” and making assumptions about how to reach them, the different voices beyond the white male spectrum were actively silenced, also within this room, which included my own. At this moment, I was not sure if I was supposed to be here and listen to this conversation because obviously I was one of these “migrants.” I asked myself, why should they see me differently? I mean me, moving in a non-white, black, light-skin body in space that has been dominantly taken over by these elder male bodies. The dominance of white males in this

room had an influence on me in terms of how I thought, felt, and expressed myself. For me, it was not natural to move freely in this space because I noticed the self-evident attitude of Dieter and Tommi, and when their conversation about racialized bodies and looks marked me as an “outsider,” it positioned them as the “insiders” (Puwar 2004).

Furthermore, my anxiety was linked to the perceived threat of white male bodies mirroring itself in the bad feelings where my past discriminatory and racist experiences were stuck and informed my present feeling at that moment (Ahmed 2004). Nevertheless, as Ahmed argues, Dieter and Tommi left this impression on me in the way they spoke of the “migrants,” which I perceived as discriminatory, and thus how I felt about it establishes my own truth of the situation coming with my own social position. According to Ahmed, my feelings were produced intentionally in order to maintain white male dominance represented by them both. They left their impression on me, and I perceived their way of speaking of “migrants” as a threat, resulting in my anxiety and thus limiting my way to move freely in this room. This intentionally created impression builds on my past discriminatory and racist experiences and thus on white dominance over racialized people. I conclude that my emotions and feelings are part of a “process of affecting and being affected” in the sense that how I became affected by the encounter with Tommi and Dieter determined my behaviour at that moment, which Ahmed confirms by stating that affect “allows movement” (2014, 207). Rutherford argues in her essay “Affect Theory and the Empirical” (2016) that the affect theory, describing the way affect informs movement, eliminates the long-presumed separation between rational and emotional acting. She calls for considering affect as an analytical concept that can provide a new way of analysing governance mechanisms, which I outline in the next section (Rutherford 2016, 286). In my next chapter, I outline the role of affect in enacting citizenship on a collective level.

3.3 The Citizens’ Truth

“Don’t hate the player, hate the game.” (Interview Lisa, April 27th, 2023)

When the municipal office for public participation presented its monitoring report for 2022, I realized that developing “successful” participation has very often been measured by the number of participants and less often by the perceptions and experiences or desires and wishes of participants. I suggest that policymakers and practitioners should listen to the experiences of citizens about participatory events and that this requires an attunement to how they feel during the encounter, to establish a fruitful and cohesive dialogue between citizens and municipal administration. Furthermore, it reveals whether there is a real interest in considering

citizens' concerns by not only letting them speak but also by making them feel that they are being heard. I refer to Ahmed and call for looking at "what emotions can do politically" (Åhäll 2018, 38; Ahmed 2014).

At my second gathering of BI Kalkberg, I sat down with Boris, Maria, and Lothar to talk about their perception of the current state of the situation, which I published in the newsletter of the cooperative office for public participation in April 2023. Our conversation revolved around the formats of participatory forums organized by the municipal administration and the fire brigade which all saw as unsatisfactory. Boris described it as "it was a demonstration of power and strength." "The fire brigade is structured like the military," Maria added. "Even if you wanted to, they would not have been giving you the opportunity to say anything." Lothar stated, "It was a very uncomfortable situation." Then they referred to an event that took place at the Kalkberg. Lothar and Boris perceived it quite differently. Lothar described it as, "There were lawyers and advisors. The 'ordinary' people could not even express themselves." Boris interpreted the situation as, "I had the feeling that it was unpleasant for them," and referred to the lawyers when they had to walk around the area and saw that it turned out to be a clearing of trees and not cut back as the fire brigade and municipal administration stated. He mentioned the difference between the participatory event where the fire brigade and municipal administration sat on a stage and the citizens below it, which in his opinion "does not allow a dialogue on eye-level". So, they mentioned their feeling of "uncomfortableness" and the "uncomfortableness" of the lawyers at the other event plus the described feelings in the email and other events like "frustration," "disappointment," "distrust," and "anger," which has built over time and is due to the long history in which the citizen initiative, the fire brigade, and municipal administration are in contact and conflict with each other. This history contains regular discontinuation of communication with BI Kalkberg on the side of the municipal administration, breaking or not following agreements, and misinformation about the state.

Danilyn Rutherford states in her essay "Affect Theory and the Empirical" that colonial regimes have put an emphasis on producing certain feelings amongst the ruled population in order to control them, and thus the way of how to understand affect between local authorities and citizens unpacks elements of the power relation between them (2016, 290). Fortier sees every act as driven by feelings and affect as an affective act, through which "affective citizenship" is constituted to form belonging that can be shaped by local authorities but also by the citizens themselves (2016, 2). In that sense, it is a legitimate question of to what extent the

municipal administration intentionally leaves this impression of them on citizens in order to maintain its power over the decision-making process and thus prevent a dialogue on eye level. The impression of the members of BI Kalkberg and thus how they feel about it is based on their evaluation of past experiences with the municipal administration and builds upon a history of contact (Ahmed 2014, 39).

The organization of the public picnic attracted the local TV. Two journalists from the “Westdeutschen Rundfunk” interviewed the attendees of the picnic, and one of them was me. When the journalists asked me about my disappointment, I expressed how frustrated I was about the outcome of this situation, where access was still denied by the municipal administration and fire brigade, which is unreasonable to me since the council had canceled the plans for the helicopter station. After the interview, I asked the journalist if many of the attendees expressed their frustration. He answered, “Yes, indeed. It will be fine. The citizens have the whip hand in this match.” I had my doubts about this, considering the long history of the Kalkberg, and could feel the frustration within me. Maria and Franz came over to me and Maria asked, “Have you complained and expressed your disappointment?” and I answered, “Of course.” In that moment I acknowledged that the feelings of Jochen, Maria, Marek, and Boris affected me and left me with the impression of a blocking municipal administration and fire brigade who was not willing to negotiate with us. Furthermore, it left me with the expression that the discontinuation of contact with BI Kalkberg was a strategy that others referred to as “waiting things out.” I heard how members of BI Kalkberg discussed at the picnic that next year would be the election of the new council, and if nothing had progressed so far, the decision could be reversed. When I listened to this, I had a sense of fear because this would mean all the effort put into this purpose would be erased with one single decision.

According to Ahmed “how we feel about another” on an individual level can turn into collective feelings, where the feeling about a group is based on the impression the group left, felt on “the surfaces of skins” of the individuals (2004, 39). In the chapter “Skin of the Collective” she that describes “the contact zone of impressions” is constituted by how this contact has been perceived based on its past evaluation (Ahmed 2004, 31). Therefore, I argue that my contact with members of BI Kalkberg resulted in my impression of the municipal administration and fire brigade, which has been shaped by the “history of contact” between the members of BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration, where my feelings of “frustration” and “disappointment” is a repeating association that was already there before I entered the conversation (Ahmed 2004, 31).

The feelings of Maria, Jochen, and Boris are not simply feelings they just have; these feelings are a response to how they became affected by the actions and communication of the municipal administration. It is more like Ahmed said, “It is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others...”(Ahmed 2014, 10). I find it important to highlight that nearly everyone I spoke to expressed similar feelings, and when we understand feelings as something that is produced as well from the outside, it is interesting to observe in my own case how the feelings imply that individuals take them as their own. Therefore, my call for listening to how citizens become affected expressed through feelings and emotions provides an insight into political power relations that become visible in the governing of public participation by the municipal administration. Therefore, I conclude that emerging “feelings are deemed to reflect or express the truth of citizenship as well as the truth of the citizen” (Fortier 2016, 3). Moreover, as long as the participatory events are constructed to prevent dialogue on eye level and produce positive feelings, the way to a collaborative future between BI Kalkberg, the municipal administration, and the fire brigade seems to still be a long one.

In chapter three I have shown that “feelings of participation” can be investigated by the theory of affect and as Ahmed stated, that feelings are produced as a result of how we become affected (Ahmed 2014; Jupp 2008). Moreover, I argued that individual feelings can become collective feelings which becomes visible in the case of BI Kalkberg. I finalized the chapter by pointing out that the “intentional” left impression of the municipal administration shapes the feelings of the members of BI Kalkberg and is based on their evaluation established through a history of contact (Ahmed 2014, 39).

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in the context of municipality-led public participation. Thereby, I followed the call of policy-makers and practitioners by addressing indirectly the question of how to address a broader range of citizens which first needs to tackle the implications of inclusion and exclusion of those they try to reach and here they referred especially to groups of people with migration background. I answer the research question of *how inclusion and exclusion is re-produced in the construction of citizenship in municipality-led public participation* by showing that exclusion and inclusion in citizen initiatives engaged in public participation are influenced by expectations, wishes, and rules of negotiation placed upon them and interlinked with an existing plurality of citizenship

concepts amongst individuals and the involved actors, such as the municipal administration and citizen initiative BI Kalkberg. Since self-organized collectives of citizen-like citizen initiatives are targeted by the local authority which administers the public participation process, I have examined the negotiation and contestation of citizenship between the municipal administration and citizen initiative BI Kalkberg and focused hereby on exclusion and inclusion mechanisms re-produced by citizen initiatives.

In summary, this paper found that inclusion and exclusion are a result of the contestation of citizenship between actors involved in municipality-led public participation. Moreover, I argued that citizenship is interlocked with social identity and representation and therefore, investigated who is included in this social identity. The analysis showed the interconnection between white privilege and engagement in citizen initiatives having an implication on the formation of citizen initiatives. I have shown that exclusion is enforced in the BI Kalkberg and the advisory board for systematic public participation through an “itinerary of silencing” and “postcolonial semiotics” linked to the social identity they created for themselves, where especially racialized people become “bodies out of place” and therefore underrepresented in public and political spaces (Spivak and Harasym 1990; Reyes 2021; Puwar 2004) Throughout the ethnographic analysis, I suggested to look at affect and how people, like myself become affected in moving through political spaces (Fortier 2016; Ahmed 2014). It reveals the established power relations which I argued are oriented toward a colonial social order since race is a category produced by colonialism and leads to the exclusion of racialized people from domains like the public political realm (Greedharry et al. 2023; Ferdinand 2022).

However, this paper argues, that inclusion and exclusion in the case of BI Kalkberg is interlinked with the construction of a good citizen which is subjugated to the expectations of the municipal administration placed on the BI Kalkberg, which they need to anticipate and act strategically on, as their scope of action is due to the decision-making power of the municipal administration limited. The construction of the good citizen stands out, as a response to the expectations of the municipal administration and requires that citizens have skills like the application of the language of the administration (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). This requires not only the capability of following the debate but also formulating interests (van Dam, Duineveld, and During 2015). As a result, public participation processes can be seen as formal policy mechanisms which create inclusion in exclusion due to the need to fulfill requirements in order to be able to participate and formulate interests (Mascareño and Carvajal 2016). The weight on language highlighted the argument that inclusion and exclusion within municipality-led public participation are historically constructed where racialized people become

intentionally excluded from public and political spaces and thus reinforce social hierarchies where the white, educated man or moreover, the white middle-class population is in the dominating position and the “inscribed social interests” prevent dismantling these hierarchies (BP Europa. 2013; Errington 2001, 20).

Therefore, I suggested incorporating the theory of affect into the ethnographic analysis and the importance of looking at how we affect and are affected by others reveals a perceived truth about built hierarchies under white male dominance but also between the BI Kalkberg and the municipal administration. In this section, I have referred to Ahmed and argued that “how we feel about another” mediates the relation between the individual and the collective, where the impression the other left is informed by associated past experiences (Ahmed 2004, 39). The feelings of members of BI Kalkberg are produced as a response to how they are affected by the actions of the municipal administration (Ahmed 2014, 10). Moreover, the production of feelings can be intentional in order to establish and maintain hierarchies, which I have experienced myself, through observing my anxiety and uncomfortableness with white males and see this as a parallel to what members of BI Kalkberg feel towards the dominance of the municipal administration. It is to be said that this paper is “inherent to my subjective positionality” and awareness, that as a researcher I obtain a powerful position over the research population and therefore I see myself in the position of tackling power and becoming complicit to it (Grassiani 2019, 249-252).

I know that the applied methodologies in this research study is part of the dilemma of the discipline of Anthropology which “allows for the possibility of decolonial approaches while being unable to truly decolonize.”¹⁸ In that sense, this research has not covered a broad investigation of inclusion and exclusion in terms of the interconnectedness between gender, class and race. My focus lied on race due to my own experiences, where I felt this was the most heavy marker in my life. Moreover, my aim was to circumvent “damage-centered research” where oppression only defines the self of communities (Tuck 2009, 413). My goal was to interrogate the dominance of whiteness in the production of discourses on citizenship which bell hooks has encouraged us to do so (Hooks 2015).

I am aware that I was only able to climb up the Kalkberg due to my privileges and support from others in order to become aware of what was happening around me, which might remain hidden for others with fewer privileges.

¹⁸ Daswani, Girish, 18.11.2021. “The (Im)Possibility of Decolonizing Anthropology.” *Everydayorientalism* (blog). <https://everydayorientalism.wordpress.com/2021/11/18/the-impossibility-of-decolonizing-anthropology/>. Accessed June 6, 2023.

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